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C H I N A T O U R I S M

EXPLORING ALONG THE SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY

THE GEJIA PEOPLE IN GUIZHOU
CHASING THE BLOOMING YELLOW FLOWERS

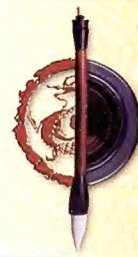


238

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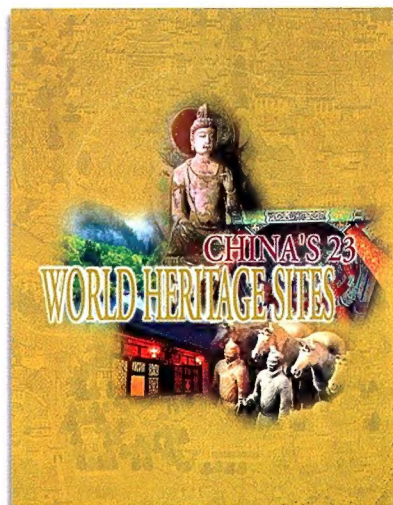
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HOT OFF THE PRESS

China's 23 World Heritage Sites

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之源

CONTENTS

No. 238 May 2000



Cover: A Tibetan religious rite (by Lin Jinghua)

From the Editor

7 Harsh Yet Rewarding

8 Update

10 Travel Notes

Feature Story

12 Travels Along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway

Photos by Zeng Chengdong, Lin Jinghua, Wang Dajun & others

Article by Zeng Chengdong & others

Going to Tibet from the hinterland of China used to be "as difficult as going up to the sky". When the Sichuan-Tibet Highway was built in the 1950s, it became the first and only access linking the Roof of the World with the rest of China. Today, in an era when air services into Lhasa are frequent and a few other roads have also been built to reach Tibet's capital, many travellers still prefer to drive from Chengdu along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway into Tibet. Though not an easy tour, they always find it very rewarding. Along the way, you can see the snow-capped mountains, pure and blue highland lakes and the unique customs of the Tibetans both in Sichuan and Tibet.

Selected Tours

46 A Yellow Flower Tour

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

The golden blossoms of the rapeseed are always an important part of spring. They cover more than 9,000 hectares of land in March in Luoping, Yunnan, occupy almost all the fields by the rivers and lakes in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces in April, and then reach the north eventually — May in Shaanxi, and June and July in Qinghai. Not only beekeepers are busy chasing the yellow blossoms these days, many travellers do so too.

Discoveries

50 The Man Who Opened the Doors of the Underworld

Photos by Baoxiu and Zheng Yunfeng Article by Baoxiu

With a civilisation of over 5,000 years, China has numerous ancient tombs scattered throughout its vast land. In Xuzhou in northern Jiangsu Province, a magnificent tomb of the Han Dynasty was discovered with the help of an excellent archaeologist, Wang Kai.



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CONTENTS

No. 238 May 2000



Excursions

- 56 Wandering in the Bamboo Sea of Southern Sichuan

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

Visiting the 4,600-hectare bamboo forest in southern Sichuan Province, you can enjoy the luxuriant greenery and learn a lot about bamboo, including its numerous varieties, uses in daily life and legends. The local people's life is closely linked with bamboo. They cook delicious dishes with bamboo shoots, use bamboo furniture, and even create beautiful works of art out of bamboo.

Culture

- 66 Jingdezhen: Town of Ceramics

Photos & article by Xiao Gang

Entering Jingdezhen, you will find yourself in a world of ceramics. Porcelain shops line the streets on both sides and people passing by all carry clay models or ceramic works either on their shoulders or bicycles. In the district of Fangjiajing, many family shops have been set up to produce imitations of the ancient Ming-dynasty porcelain pieces.

Customs

- 70 Visiting the Gejia People on the Chong'an River

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

In a remote mountainous area in Guizhou, a minority ethnic people — the Gejia — live a life of primitive style and unique customs. A visit to their land reminds you that though life is hard for them in some ways, they are the ones who have kept a close relationship with nature.

New Attractions

- 78 Sanzhaolun: A Model National Forest Park

Article by Zhang Zhaogui

Traveller's Corner

- 82 Macao: Brilliant Gifts, Everlasting Memory

Photos by Li Liang

Article by Xiao Yu

- 84 Next Issue

- 86 Executive's Memo



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FROM THE EDITOR

HARSH YET REWARDING

Known as the Roof of the World, Tibet possesses an irresistible mystical charm that bewitches explorers all over the world. Lhasa, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region, is now accessible by plane. Nevertheless, many travellers prefer entering Tibet by land in order to capture the breath-taking scenery along the way. You can choose to enter from Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai or Xinjiang. In this issue, we introduce the most well-known one of the four routes, the Sichuan-Tibet Highway.

The Sichuan-Tibet Highway, 2,400 km long, starts from Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, and ends in Lhasa. At Xinduqiao, it forks into southern and northern routes, and joins again in Bamda. Travelling on this exceptionally arduous highway, travellers may be greeted with challenges such as landslides, floods, and even snowstorms at any moment. However, these hardships do not hold back the bold-hearted. Thousands of them, undaunted by the risks, choose to travel on this highway, just to feast their eyes on the impressive landscape. The experience they shared with us and the pictures they took will surely encourage more people to follow in their steps.

For those who enjoy an easier-style travelling, we offer you two different choices: opening up the gate to the underworld, the door to a Han-dynasty imperial mausoleum in Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, and a visit to the village of Gejia people in Chong'an, Guizhou Province. The former one is an interesting account of Chinese archaeological discoveries while the latter is a lively depiction of a minority people.

Those who have a passion for nature should not miss the two extraordinary journeys of colour: the "yellow" tour which looks for the blossoming rapeseed flowers in various corners of China, and the "green" journey that allows you to drown yourself in a sea of verdant bamboo in southern Sichuan.

Photo by Huang Yanhong

Macao Receives More Visitors

Visitors to Macao increased 20 percent in January this year compared with that of the same period last year. Macao is considered as the Las Vegas of the East and its characteristic culture attracts tourists from all over the world. Income from tourism makes up a great part of the region's revenue.

An important cause of the growth in tourism is Macao's improving social environment and thriving economy. Since the founding of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government in last December, the public security situation has turned for the better and the morale of the police has risen. Macao's economy has also shown signs of recovering — with its internal consumption increasing, export growing and unemployment rate decreasing. It is noteworthy that two Hong Kong enterprises, a pharmaceutical factory and a foreign bank, recently moved their headquarters to Macao. At present, the Macao SAR government is working on improving its administrative efficiency so as to provide more and better services to investors and tourists as well.



New Yangtse River Bridge Planned, Jiangsu

A new highway bridge on the lower reaches of the Yangtse River will be built to link Yangzhou and Zhenjiang on either side of the river in East China's Jiangsu Province. Both cities are famous tourist destinations with rich cultural relics. The construction of the bridge will shorten the time needed for crossings between the two cities and thus benefit the local people as well as tourists.

The Yangzhou-Zhenjiang Bridge will total 23 km, including the highway section. The bridge will be built in two sections. The northern section in Yangzhou will be a stayed cable bridge with a span of 400 metres. The southern section of 1,450 metres in Zhenjiang will be a suspension bridge.

Travel Centre Opens in Beijing

The Beijing Xidan Tourism Trade Centre has opened at the Xidan commercial area, on the Chang'an Boulevard in the city centre west of the Tiananmen Square. Founded by the Beijing Century Resource Tour Exchange & Service Co. Ltd., the centre offers customers various tourist services, including travel consultation, itinerary display, money exchange and ticket booking. Travel agencies from other parts of the country can also open their branches in the centre. Travel has become popular among the Beijing citizens who now enjoy longer holidays. The founding of this travel business centre will provide the holiday-makers with better information and more choices.

Dingshi Ruins with Ancient Mysteries, Guangxi

The excavation of the Dingshi ruins — a tomb site in Yongning County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, reveals the mystery of human life in the early New Stone Age.

According to some archaeologists participating in the digging, their discoveries demonstrate an ancient way of living totally different from that found in the sites previously excavated in the Yellow River and Yangtse River valleys. A total of 331 tombs have been found in an area of 5,000 square metres. One-third of the remains of more than 400 ancient human beings were buried with their bodies dismembered. In tombs of the same period excavated in other places, the bodies were found buried with bent limbs. The architecture of the Dingshi tombs and the burial objects unearthed, including pottery and other cultural artifacts, are also unique.



Mount Huangshan Wins UNESCO Award

Mount Huangshan in East China's Anhui Province received an award from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its effective management in protecting its cultural relics. Mount Huangshan is one of the most charming scenic mountains in China. It was listed as a World Heritage site for both natural scenery and cultural relics in 1990. The local authorities expressed that they would continue their efforts in protecting its natural beauty and cultural legacy.

Fujian — Champion of Greenery in China

Fujian Province by the Taiwan Strait in East China has been leading the nation in the forestry coverage rate since 1978. In 1995, the province had 57.3 percent of its territory covered with vegetation. Now the figure has risen to 60.5 percent. Forest coverage in Fujian has exceeded nine million hectares, with that for timber reservation totalling 418 million square metres.

Mount Wuyi, a wonderland with luxuriant greenery and many cultural relics in northern Fujian, has long been an attractive tourist destination. It was designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1999.

Lanzhou Trade Fair, Gansu

The Northwest province Gansu is going to host an investment and trade fair in Lanzhou, the provincial capital, from August 26-30. This has been an annual event since 1992, but its name has been changed from the original Gansu-Lanzhou Trade Fair to the current China Lanzhou Investment and Trade Fair. The purpose of the fair is to help accelerate the province's opening up to the outside world and promote its economic development.

Gansu is located on the upper reaches of the Yellow River. In its territory, along the ancient Silk Road, are numerous historical sites and cultural relics, including the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang and the Jiayuguan Pass, the western end of the Ming-dynasty Great Wall. The grassland in southern Gansu inhabited by people of the Tibetan, Hui and other minority ethnic groups offer colourful customs.

14th International Travel Expo Hong Kong

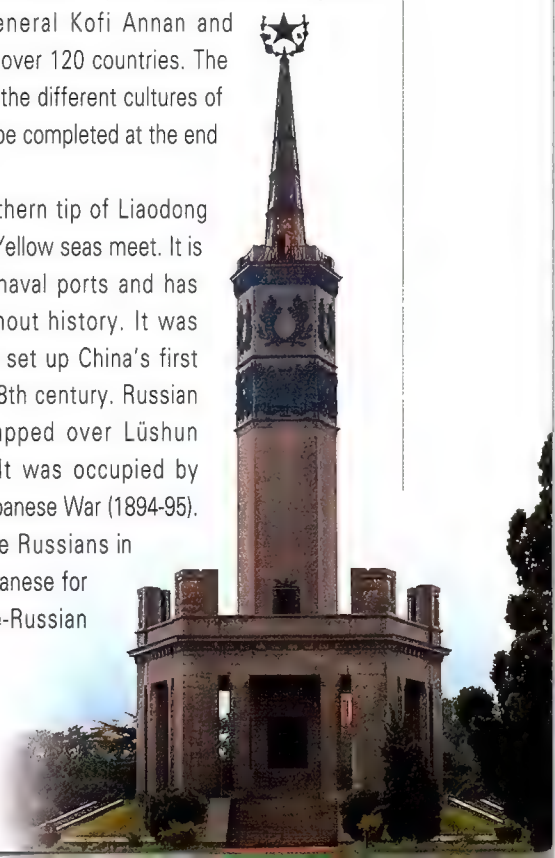
The 14th International Travel Expo Hong Kong will be held from June 8-11 at the Hong Kong International Convention and Exhibition Centre in Hong Kong. According to the organiser, around 40 countries and regions have so far confirmed their participation and more are expected. Among the participants of this year's fair are two new members, the national tourism organisations of Qatar and Sharjah. There are many other new participants including travel agents, hotels, destinations and scenic sites from Canada, Dubai, Germany, Hong Kong, the mainland of China, Myanmar, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe. The United Kingdom and France, who missed the previous one, will rejoin in the show this year.

As the game of golf has received increasing attention in recent years, the ITE Hong Kong 2000 will include a Golf Holiday Pavilion in the coming event. The expo will also highlight corporate travel, a subject with increasing importance in the globe. A forum focused on corporate and incentive travel will be launched on the second day of the fair (June 9). Various seminars and presentations will also be organised to cover flexible and economic measures for air tickets, hotel bookings, corporate accounts with hotels and travel agents, and Internet-bookings. The expo will provide good opportunities for exhibitors to promote their products and meet with the corporate buyers directly.

World Peace Park to Be Built in Lüshun, Liaoning

A world peace park will be built in Lüshun, a naval port in Northeast China's Liaoning Province. The 400,000-square-metre park will feature a forest of steles with peace prayers penned by worldwide political figures, including the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and presidents and prime ministers of over 120 countries. The architecture of the park will reflect the different cultures of each country, and construction will be completed at the end of this year.

Lüshun is located at the southern tip of Liaodong Peninsula, where the Bohai and Yellow seas meet. It is one of the world's five largest naval ports and has witnessed repeated wars throughout history. It was there that the Qing government set up China's first modern naval force in the early 18th century. Russian and Japanese imperialists scrapped over Lüshun repeatedly in modern history. It was occupied by Japanese troops during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). The port fell into the hands of the Russians in 1895 and was occupied by the Japanese for 40 years following the Japanese-Russian War in 1904.



News

China Famous Hotel Corporation: VIP Travel in China**Guangzhou**

Formed in 1991 with member hotels in 41 of China's most popular tourism cities, including Hong Kong and Macao, China Famous Hotel Corporation (CFHC) has issued more than 200,000 VIP cards to assure member guests the best services and facilities in these member hotels.

CFHC recently opened a reservation centre to better serve guests and business travellers. A reservation membership card is available in 24 hours to those who enrol via phone, fax or E-mail in any of CFHC member hotels. Reservation members who stay in these member hotels for a total of 20 nights will automatically be upgraded to the VIP card member status.

As a VIP card member, you will enjoy benefits such as discounts on food and beverages and a wide range of services designed for your comfort and convenience. As well, you can earn valuable points for upgrading room nights or even complimentary room nights at member hotels. You will also be entitled to special check-in privileges, including a special usher service and complimentary flowers and fruit in your room. In an over-booked situation, hotel accommodations of similar grade will be arranged.

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News

Extension Work of Baima Temple Started**Henan**

The first-phase extension project of Baima Temple in Luoyang, Henan Province, has already begun. The temple is the first of its kind built in China after Buddhism was introduced into the country.

Baima Temple, 1,932 years old, is a cultural relic under state protection and a key temple in the country. The newly-built square is 1.5 hectares large. A 24-metre-wide paved path leads to the main entrance. Eighty-three metres to the south of the gate stands a stone archway 14 metres wide and 8.9 metres tall. Sixteen metres to the north of the archway lies a 2000-square-metre pond for freeing captive fishes, which divides the square into two halves. The southern half will be covered with an evergreen lawn while the northern section will have shrubs such as various species of peony.

Other than the square, the extension project of the Baima Temple Buddhist Culture Area also includes the construction of a Buddha-worshipping court, a Buddhist hospital as well as a Buddhist college.



Transport

Inter-city Bus Routes Operated in Guangdong**Guangdong**

A network of inter-city shuttle bus routes radiating from Guangzhou has been put into operation. Covering the entire Guangdong Province, this network links up scenic spots and historical attractions, bringing great convenience to sightseeing in the province.

The five routes that have started operation are: Guangzhou-Shenzhen route (Guangzhou's Jinhan Terminal — Shenzhen's Huaqiao City — Shenzhen's Futian Terminal); Guangzhou-Zhuhai route (Guangzhou's Jinhan Terminal — Panyu's Xiangjiang Wildlife World — the former residence of Dr. Sun Yat-sen — Jida's Jiuzhou City — New Yuanmingyuan Garden — Gongbei Passenger Bus Terminal); Guangzhou-Zhaoqing route (Guangzhou's Jinhan Terminal — Sanshui Forest Park — Mt. Dinghu — Zhaoqing Passenger Bus Terminal); Guangzhou's Jinhan Terminal-Nanhai's Mt. Xiqiao route; and Guangzhou-Nanhai Film & TV City route (Nanhai's Nanguo Peach Garden — Nanhai Film & TV City).

The inter-city shuttle buses have a regular time schedule. Tourists can stop and go sightseeing at a certain spot and continue the rest of their journey afterwards with the same ticket.



Culture

Tongli: A Captivating Water Village

Jiangsu

Tongli in Wujiang City, Jiangsu Province, is a waterside town of 64 square kilometres with a population totalling 330,000. Sitting by the shore of Taihu Lake, Tongli is easily accessible, being only 18 kilometres from Suzhou, 80 kilometres from Shanghai and 130 kilometres from Hangzhou. A distinctive waterside village with a long cultural history, it has become the Tongli Scenic Area, a section of the Taihu Scenic Area. It has also been designated the only cultural town under provincial-level protection and one of the famous historical and cultural towns in Jiangsu Province. In 1998, the town and its Tuisi Garden were chosen by the country as two of the applicants for the UNESCO's World Heritage sites.

Tongli is encircled by five lakes and is divided by 15 rivers into seven islands, which are, nevertheless, linked up by 49 stone bridges of various styles built in different dynasties. The row upon row of buildings of mainly Ming and Qing styles, the zigzagging lanes and alleys, together with the winding streams form a wonderful picture of a southern China town.

From the Song to the Qing Dynasty, particularly in the Ming and Qing, many natives of Tongli took up posts as officials away from their hometown, making them yearn for their native land. Therefore after their retirement, they built residences for the comfort of their remaining years. According to town records, from 1271 to 1911, 38 residential gardens, some grand and magnificent, some small and elegant, and 47 temples, were built. The existing Ming-dynasty structures include Sanxie Hall, Wuhe Archway and Renji Taoist Temple. Well-protected Qing-dynasty buildings include Tuisi Garden, the Ren Clan Temple and the former residence of Chen Qubing. The typical scenery of a water village of Tongli has also made it an ideal site for film and TV shooting.

Tongli has put great effort into the restoration works of its heritage. At the same time, it will continue to open up new scenic spots and launch distinctive tourist programmes, souvenirs, and local products to further develop tourism.

Recommendation

Touring the City of Changshu

Jiangsu

Changshu in Jiangsu Province, 1,142 square kilometres with a population of 1.04 million, is a flourishing port, trading centre and tourist city in the Yangtse River Delta. Situated 100 kilometres to the west of Shanghai, Changshu enjoys a favourable geographical location and convenient transport, which have given rise to its bustling industrial and commercial activities. Its fertile soil and other rich natural resources have earned it the reputation of being a land of fish and rice in southern China.

Changshu is an ancient cultural city with a history of over 5,000 years. It is the cradle of many Chinese literati including Yan Yan, Confucius' only student from southern China, and Weng Tonghe, the teacher of Emperor Guangxu of the late Qing Dynasty. Changshu has its share of nationally famous scientists and engineers even today.

A clean and garden-like city, Changshu is a place of verdant mountains and crystal-clear waters. With its long history, it abounds with cultural relics, of which 97 are put under state-, provincial- or municipal-level protection. One of the highlights of its natural scenery is the Yushan Hill-Shanghu Lake Scenic Area, an important section of the Taihu Scenic Area. The Yushan Forest Park,

the gurgling streams, the quaint old buildings together with the criss-crossing alleys bring about the distinctive serene ambience of the city. Moreover, Changshu is also complete with tourist facilities such as travel agencies and hotels.



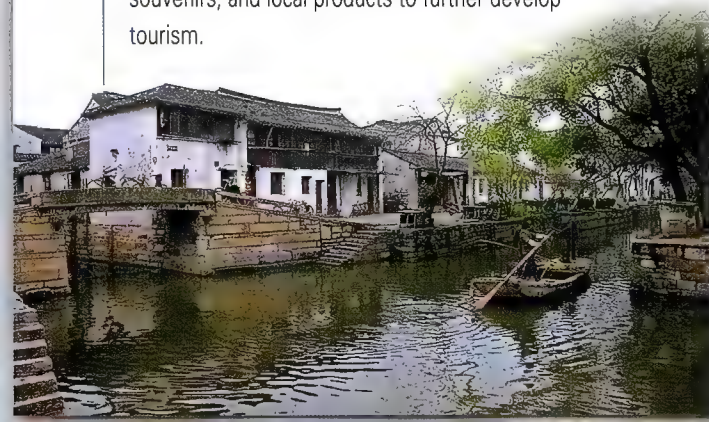
Scenic Spot

A Mysterious Canyon Discovered in Kuqa, Xinjiang

Xinjiang

A mysterious canyon with ancient Qiuci grottoes was recently discovered in Kuqa County at the southern foot of Tianshan Mountains, Xinjiang. Teeming with caves, springs and rocks, the canyon is a spectacular topographical attraction.

The canyon was discovered accidentally by a local villager in Kuqa County. One of the caves there houses 218 intact Qiuci grottoes, depicting life-like human portraits of various images. Different from those found in the renowned Kizir Thousand-Buddha Caves, another tourist attraction near Kuqa, the grottoes here are complete with relevant inscriptions.



An aerial photograph of a rugged, mountainous landscape. A winding road, likely the Sichuan-Tibet Highway, snakes through the valleys between steep, rocky slopes. The terrain is a mix of dark, rocky outcrops and lighter, possibly snow-covered or sparsely vegetated areas. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

FEATURE STORY

TRAVELS ALONG THE SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY

Photos by Zeng Chengdong, Lin Jinchua,
Wang Daqin & others
Article by Zeng Chengdong & others



The Sichuan-Tibet Highway winding up the mountains by Wang Dajun

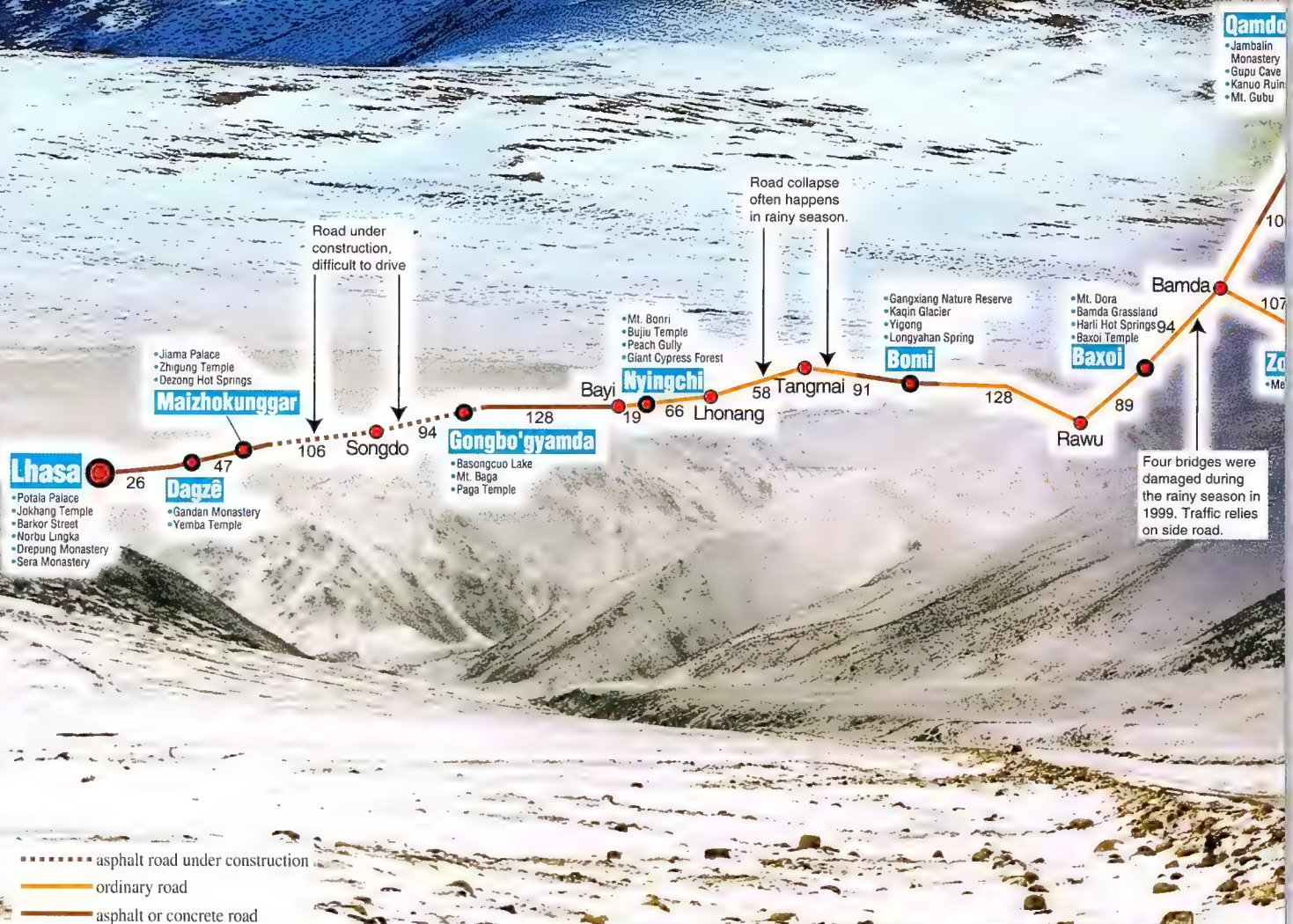
About 100 million years ago, when the Indian and Eurasian plates clashed, the Himalayas gradually rose from the ancient Tethys Sea. These mountains came to settle at an average height of 4,000 metres above sea level around 2 million years ago. This is the world's youngest and most spectacular highland, known as the Roof of the World.

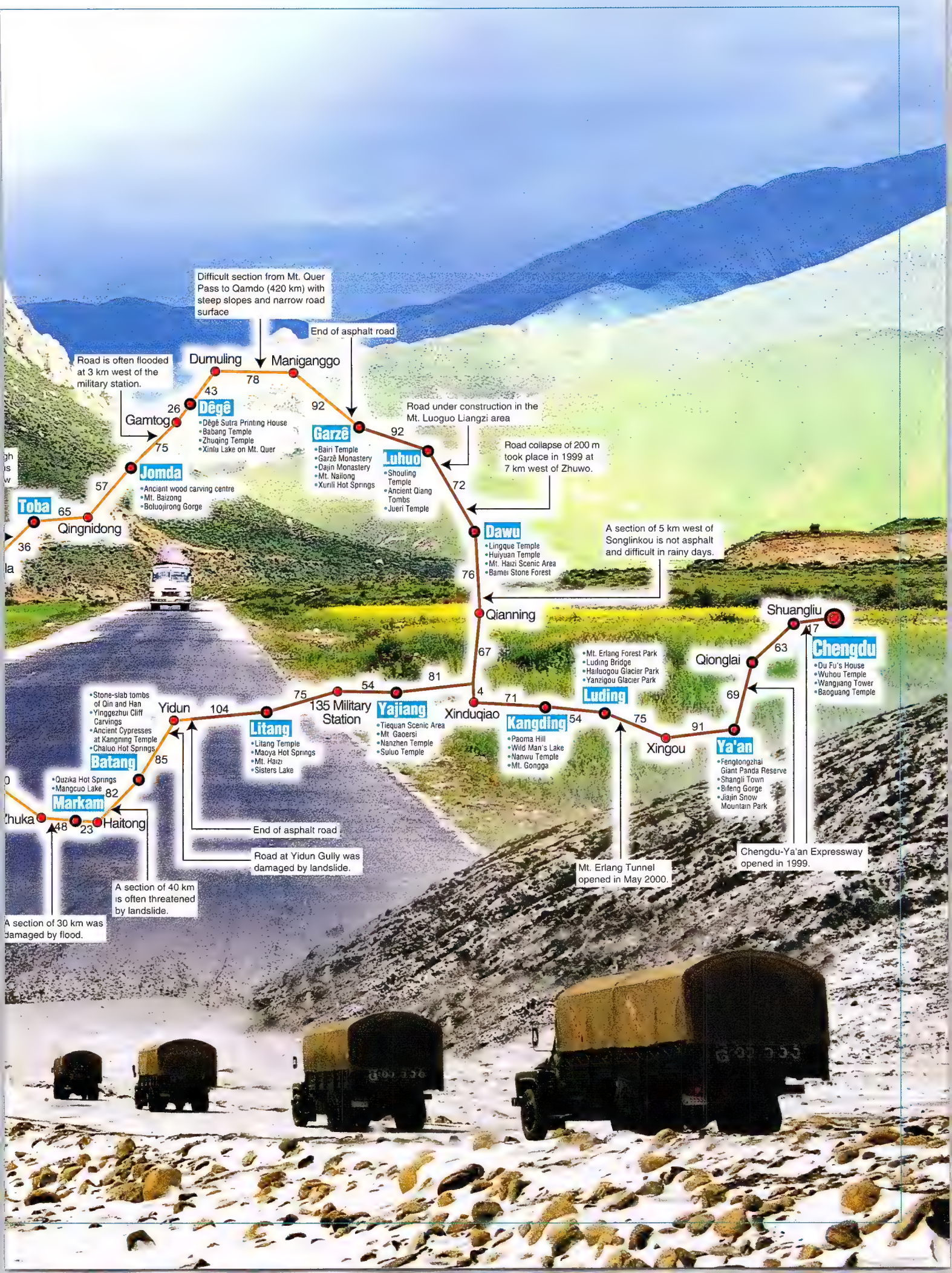
Until 50 years ago, the Roof of the World did not have a single inch of highway. Throughout Tibet, there were only 14 motor vehicles, of which only four functioned. To travel or transport goods in Tibet then was as difficult as going into space. Yaks and even sheep were used to carry cargo. One special kind of sheep could carry a few kg of cargo and travel 10 km a day.

Later, highways from Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and Xinjiang into Tibet were built one after another. The 2,400-km Sichuan-Tibet Highway is noteworthy for its human cost: a labour force of 100,000 soldiers did the work and 3,000 of them sacrificed their lives. This magic road meanders along, piercing 21 mountains that stand over 4,000 metres high and crossing 14 turbulent rivers to eventually link up the two ancient cities of Chengdu and Lhasa.

The opening of the road to traffic did not mean the end of all danger and perils. Landslides, snowstorms and rainstorms, and treacherous conditions make some people hesitate to take to this road. Despite this, many travellers still choose it for the unique scenes, and the Tibetan culture and people along this route. For them, the hardships are simply part of a beautiful adventure.

SKETCH MAP OF THE SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY





Difficult section from Mt. Quer Pass to Qamdo (420 km) with steep slopes and narrow road surface

End of asphalt road

Road is often flooded at 3 km west of the military station.

Dumuling

78

Maniganggo

92

Gamtog

26

Dêgê

43

Jomda

75

Toba

65

Qingnidong

36

Garzê

92

Luhuo

72

Dawu

76

Qianning

67

Shuangliu

63

Chengdu

17

Qionglai

69

Ya'an

91

Xingou

75

Luding

54

Kangding

71

Xinduqiao

4

Yajiang

81

135 Military Station

54

Litang

75

Yidun

104

Batang

85

Markam

82

Haotong

23

Chuka

48

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36

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92

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SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY

CHENGDU—XINDUQIAO

Article by Zeng Chengdong

Chengdu — Ya'an — Tianquan — Erlang Mountain

Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province and the long-known "richly endowed kingdom", is also the starting point of the Sichuan-Tibet Highway. Formerly it took four hours by car from Chengdu to Ya'an, but the new expressway has shortened it to only one hour. Before 1955, Ya'an was the seat of Xikang Province, and as the highway starting point of the time, it was strategically important. Historically, the city has been home to many ethnic groups, including the Han, Tibetan and Yi people.

The long history of Ya'an has left it with historical sites, including the Han-dynasty

Gaoyi and Fanmin towers, and the ancient town of Shangli. The new wildlife park recently opened in the scenic Bifeng Gorge has become the city's new attraction.

Going upstream from Ya'an along a Qingyi River tributary through Tianquan County, you reach the heartland of the towering Erlang Mountain, the highway's first natural barrier. Though at Xingou, a town at the foot of Erlang, it is only several metres above sea level, the altitude rises dramatically to 3,437 metres at the mountain top. On fine days, the snow-capped Gongga Mountain, 7,556 metres, is visible in the distance.

(Tip: The Erlang Mountain Tunnel is planned to open officially in May 2000. Check before you set off.)

Ludingqiao — Hailuo Gully — Kangding — Paoma Mountain

Ludingqiao stands on the other side of Erlang Mountain where the Dadu River rushes by. Luding County, where fruits grow in great abundance due to the mild climate, is a lovely part of Garzê Prefecture. The county became famous when the Qing-dynasty Emperor Kangxi personally named a bridge there Luding Bridge, implying stability around the Luhe River after a local rebellion was put down there. On May 29, 1935, the Red Army on the Long March defeated the enemy troops guarding this bridge in a fierce two-hour battle and successfully crossed the river.

Today the biggest attraction in the county is Hailuo Gully, a low sea-level glacier park with unique views. During peak seasons, it is a very busy and crowded place.

On the Dadu River, 20 km upstream, is the Zheduo tributary, which leads to Kangding, capital of Garzê Tibetan





Autonomous Prefecture. Though it is a town long inhabited by both Han and Tibetan people, the Tibetan lifestyle is more pronounced. The city of Kangding straddles the Zheduo River narrowly in an unusually crowded layout, leaving little space between buildings. Someone once joked that people in two buildings side by side can shake hands.

The Paoma Mountain, a place named in the famous *Kangding Love Song*, stands just outside the town. Though only 400 metres higher than the town, ascending the

mountain requires great effort. During festivals, people overwhelm the mountain,

1. Sunrise at Gongga Mountain (by Wang Jianjun)
2. The flat land in the Ya'an area in western Sichuan Province (by Hong Lan)
3. It's a thrilling experience to travel on the Erlang Mountain Highway. (by Zeng Chengdong)
4. The newly opened tunnel at Erlang Mountain saves drivers four hours in the journey. (by Yan Hong)

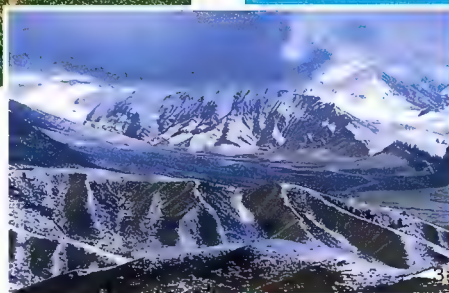
Erlang Mountain

The Erlang Mountain was made famous by a song. For years, traffic along the road was tightly controlled, allowing vehicles to travel one way every other day. Still, there were accidents and congestion. Often it took half a day, or even a whole day, to cross the mountain, and many regular drivers spent the night on the road. The low temperatures caused some of them to burn their spare tyre for heat. No wonder many drivers shake their heads at the mention of this mountain.

At the end of 1999, the expressway from Chengdu to Ya'an opened to traffic, cutting the trip down to one hour. What delighted drivers most, however, was that almost simultaneously, the Erlang Mountain Tunnel was completed. The tunnel will open for full two-way service in May 2000. This difficult project, costing some 500 million yuan, begins at Longdan Stream in Tiaoquan County and ends at Biefu Village in Luding County, covering 8,596 metres in total, of which 4,176 metres are the tunnel. The project cuts 97 kilometres off the trip and changes a four-hour trip into a 35-minute one. Besides, the hassles and danger caused by traffic congestion are gone.

If you leave Chengdu in the morning, you can have lunch at Luding, something that was unthinkable before. Luding and Ya'an, on either side of Erlang, are busy with plans to turn the mountain into a forest park and the

former arid, dangerous road into a scenic spot for tourists.





SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY: CHENGDU—XINDUQIAO



particularly on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month when a solemn ceremony for worshipping the Buddha takes place here.

In the market in Kangding, Han Chinese sell goods from inland regions while the Kangba people, in Tibetan attire, sell their homemade yak butter, which they cut with rope instead of knife. They drink beer and enjoy life in this year-round sunny spot.

Zheduo Mountain — Xinduqiao

Just outside Kangding City, you cross the 4,150-metre high Zheduo Mountain, which is several hundred

metres higher than Erlang. Since Kangding itself is over 2,600 metres high, Zheduo seems easy to climb. You only feel the altitude when you get off the bus and start walking in the cold fresh air. Once through the mountain pass, the scenery

resembles the Swiss Alps, but with fewer trees. In the distance, a clear river meanders through the grassland.

(Tip: You can assess your fitness here. If your altitude sickness is serious, you'd better return to Kangding.)




People in Kangding say that you have arrived in the Tibetan region only after crossing the "pass", meaning the Zheduo Mountain. This is an apt description because it is a completely different world on the other side. On this expansive pastureland, sturdy Tibetan men wear square red headscarves. Some wear headgear

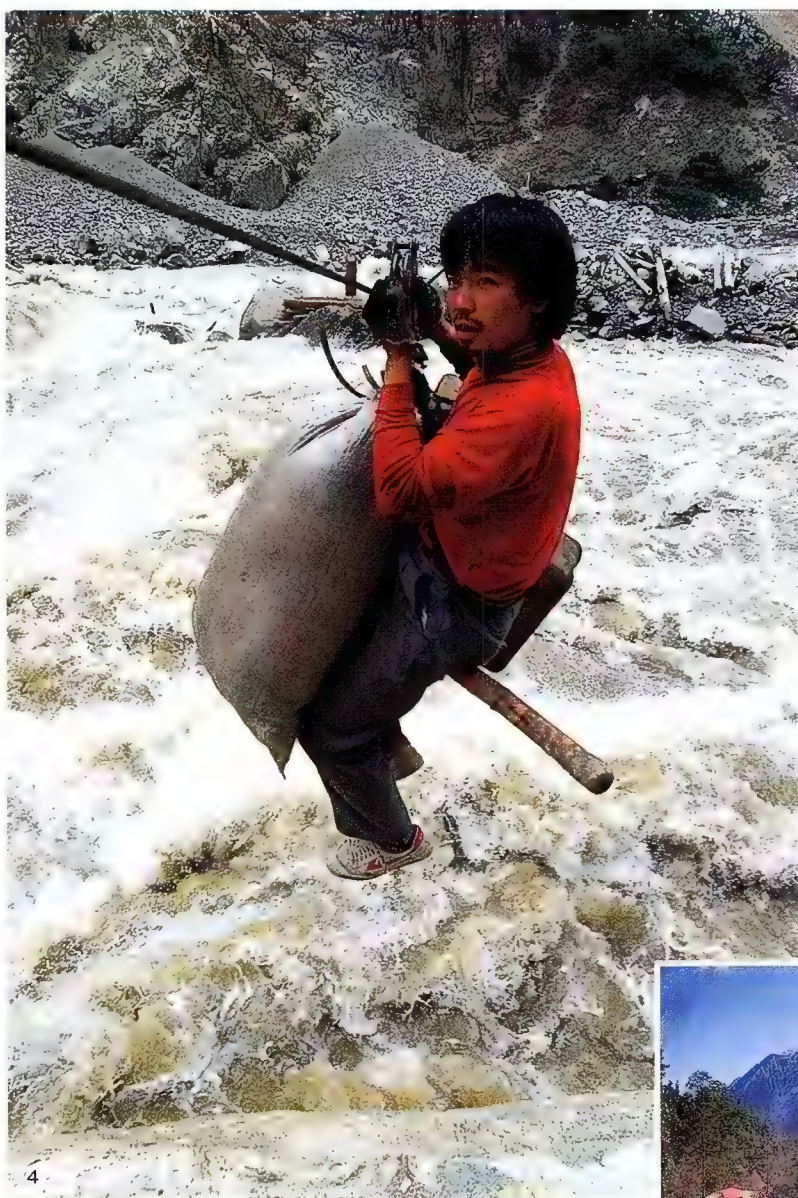
plaited with red threads, which has the lovely name of hero knot. These Tibetans are commonly referred to as Kangba.

Xinduqiao marks an important point of divergence, for here the road into Tibet splits in two. One leads north, straight through Bamei, Luhuo, Garzê, Dêgê and Qamdo to Bamda. The southern route continues west and enters Tibet via Yajiang, Litang and Batang to eventually meet the northern route at Bamda.

(Tip: Choosing your route into Tibet depends on road conditions and your objectives. The southern route is 200 km shorter and on lower altitude. The northern

route's scenery is more spectacular and varied, and appreciated by painters and photographers.) 

1. The 300-year-old Luding Bridge become famous after the Red Army forcefully crossed it during the Long March. (by Lin Jinghua)
2. A mountain fair is held on the Paoma Mountain annually (by Wang Dajun)
3. The glacier found in Hailuo Gully is of the lowest altitude of all glaciers in the world. (by Wang Jianjun)
4. Sliding over the Dadu River (by Wang Dajun)
5. Camp Site 2 in Hailuo Gully is rich in geothermal resources. (by Hong Lan)



Hailuo Gully — a World of Glacial Ice

Hailuo Gully is located at the foot of the Gongga Mountain, which is considered as "the king of all the mountains in Sichuan". The gully is famous for its low altitude glacier.

Soon after passing Campsite One, you enter a primitive forest. Near Campsite Two, five km ahead, you'll see numerous hot springs spread in the gully. A public bath has been built at one such hot spring on the right. It is an unusually refreshing experience to enjoy a hot spring bath while viewing the snow-capped peaks surrounding you. Continue up the mountain, and you'll reach Campsite Three, where a vista terrace offers a vantage point for admiring the glacier and the mountains. Braver travellers can walk further to the edge of the glacier to see the wonderland of ice. From the top of the crystal Gateway Cove, you can see the distant glacier where Mother Nature has created various sculptured images, such as magnificent archways and bridges, and vivid figures of boats and mushrooms. The lucky ones may be able to see the magic icetail composed of huge ice blocks, which presents an imposing scene 1,100 metres wide and 1,080 metres tall. It's thrilling when the icetail explodes, sending ice clusters crashing onto the ice cliffs with a deafening thunderous sound and trailing showers of snowy mist.

Down produces the most breathtaking beauty in Hailuo Gully. The early rays turn the peaks of the Gongga Mountain into an unimaginable gorgeous red. Many photographers have been attracted to the gully simply because of this unbelievable sight.

Golden Rush Avenue and Hailuo Hotel in Hailuo



*From Campsite 20
view to a hot
spring. Hailuo
Hotel is
located in
the area
for a mountain
view.*



SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY: CHENGDU—XINDUQIAO





1. At a Tibetan sacrificial ceremony called *chamu* (by Wang Dajun)
2. A wedding held at a village in Kangding (by Wang Dajun)

Wild Man's Lake

Yarenhai (Wild Man's Lake), or Muggor Co in Tibetan, is one of the largest alpine lakes in northwestern Sichuan with an area of four square kilometres. Until it was broadly opened to public in 1988, it had long been veiled in mystery. Visitors will be

surprised to find such a serene and enchanting fairyland only 90 kilometres from the city of Kangding.

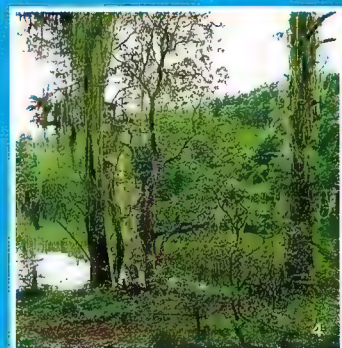


The first thing that greets you in the scenic area is a highland lake embedded in the verdure — the Qisehai (Seven-Corner Lake) which gleams brightly in the sunlight. Wild ducks are often seen swimming in the lake.

Five kilometres further up is the hot spring area with a water temperature reaching as high as 93°C, hot enough to boil eggs. After paying the admission fee of five yuan, visitors will get an egg to cook in the hot spring. Strangely, the yolk is always cooked before the egg white. There are also the Clear-Eyes Spring and the Feet-Soaking Spring.

The Wild Man's Lake is at 3,700 metres altitude, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and dozens of small lakes. In the morning, quivering silhouettes of the mountains sit on the tranquil water, while in the afternoon, the calmness may be replaced by turbulent waves. The azalea blossoms in the Azalea Gully is also a must-see in the area. In mid-April every year, more than 26 species of the plant blossom in a beautiful scene that lasts for four months.

Wild Man's Lake, 26 km from Feet-Soaking Spring, 5



3. The Feet-Soaking Spring (by Yan Hong)
4. A virgin forest in this scenic area (by Lin Jinghua)



SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY

XINDUQIAO—BATANG—BAMDA

(SOUTHERN ROUTE)

Article by Si Yao and Huo Wei

Gaoersi Mountain — Gongga Mountain — Yajiang

The southern route follows a twisting road over the huge Gaoersi Mountain. The weather is very changeable and fog drifts constantly by, but the scenery is really charming. Halfway up to the pass, there is a good place to view the Gongga Mountain, but unfortunately there is no visible established mark, making it difficult to find. We found the right place and were rewarded with a panoramic view of the magnificent mountain.

Tip: To view the Gongga Mountain, look to the peak in the north, which provides a gorgeous sunset scene.

The pass is about 5,000 metres above sea level and the road down the other side runs parallel with the Longba River. On the way there are many water stations serving motor vehicles, where water shoots up from hoses like small fountains. I saw many trucks getting their radiators filled. One driver said he had to stop 10 times to add water on his trip over the mountain. On this zigzagging road, squealing brakes can be heard all the time.

The Yalong River runs about 2,200 metres by the foot of the mountain. When you see fields and some buildings jammed between the sheer cliffs, it means you have arrived at Yajiang. In Tibetan, this town's name means "river mouth", and indeed the place has had a major ferry pier since ancient times. During the Eastern Han Dynasty 2,000



years ago, Yajiang was home to the Balang Kingdom. Once out of Yajiang, the elevation rises again.

Kazila Mountain — Litang

You may need to travel from dawn to dusk along a winding road on the 4,487-metre-high Kazila Mountain before arriving in Litang. This county seat lies in Sichuan's Garzê Prefecture at 4,014 metres above sea level,

giving it a reputation as one of the highest towns in the world. About 95 percent of the population are Tibetans. Since ancient times, it has been a tea and horse exchange market where businessmen gathered.

Annually, in early August, a horse race is held in Litang. Competitors demonstrate the grassland people's unique worship of military spirit on horseback. Successful riders are regarded as heroes, winning the acclaim of the spectators and the hearts of young girls. On the race day, the girls wear all their jewellery to show the family's position and their own beauty. The Tibetans in western Sichuan and eastern Tibet are strongly built. The men, usually over 1.8 metres tall, all have a massive and healthy physique, and a dark red complexion and sharp black eyes.



These tough and brave nomadic people grow up on horseback and are proficient marksmen with rifles or arrows. The horse race is an occasion for them to display their heroic nature. When the signal gun is fired, all the horses shoot off

1. The characteristically decorated window of a residential house in Litang (by Zheng Ligang)
2. A highland grazing ground (by Lin Jinghua)
3. Passing a marshland in Litang (by Lin Jinghua)
4. Gaoersi Mountain provides a vantage position to view the Gongga Mountain. (by Wang Dajun)





SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY XINDUQIAO—BATANG—BAMDA



like arrows and the spectators shout, whistle and laugh, either cheering or jeering the riders. The most wonderful is the competition of comprehensive skills, which include the pick-up of a silk hata scarf while riding and shooting with a rifle or a bow on horseback. The riders' lightning speed takes your breath away. Sometimes, amidst

the screams of the girls, a rider falls off or even is pulled along by his horse for a dozen metres, but surprisingly he simply jumps back up onto his horse.

The horse race is also a commodity exchange fair. Herdsmen come with their families and animals several days before the start of the event. They set up their own tents around the racing ground, creating a town of tents on the grassland.



(Tip: Beware that a stay in the high altitude of Litang can bring on altitude sickness. Visitors should rest well here.)

Haizi Mountain — Sisters Lake — Batang

The Haizi Mountain, part of the Shaluli Mountains, is typical of the landform of the glacial age. Glaciers still cover this area. The name of this mountain, meaning



lake mountain, may come from its highland lake. The Sisters Lake at the foot of the mountain is said to have a "demon" which calls out loudly now and then.

West of the Sisters Lake and past Yidun Village, is Batang, a land of blessing, where produce is in great abundance. Within the boundary of Batang, there is a great reserve of geothermal resources, in addition to a total of 107 lakes of varying sizes. Despite the blessing, Batang was almost destroyed in the 1994 earthquake. Many of the county's buildings today are newly built.

1. A tent town is built on the grassland during the horse race season. (by Li Dan)
2. Local Tibetans playing a game called *bazi* (by Zheng Ligang)
3. The fashion show is an important programme of the festival. (by Lin Jinghua)
4. Dancing Guozhuang on the grassland (by Wang Dajun)



SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY XINDUQIAO—BATANG—BAMDA



Markam — Chuka — Zogang — Bamda

Sichuan's Batang County borders Tibet, and once you have crossed the bridge on the Jinsha River (the upper reaches of the Yangtze), you are in Tibet. The road crosses the Zongla Mountain and runs toward Markam, the convergence point of the Sichuan-Tibet and Yunnan-Tibet highways. Richly endowed with natural resources, Markam is also home to some of China's rare animals such as the lesser panda and golden monkey. Dragon spruce and white birch trees are also found here in great numbers.

Chuka is where the Sichuan-Tibet Highway crosses the Lancang River and thus is an important transportation hub. Floods often hit the road from Markam to Chuka and in 1999 over 30 km of road was destroyed. Zogang, which in Tibetan means cattle back, lies about 100 km to the west and is famous for medicinal herbs. Tibetans regard the snow-capped Meili Mountain as a sacred mountain.

Bamda is a small town where the northern and southern routes of the Sichuan-Tibet Highway merge. From the mountain



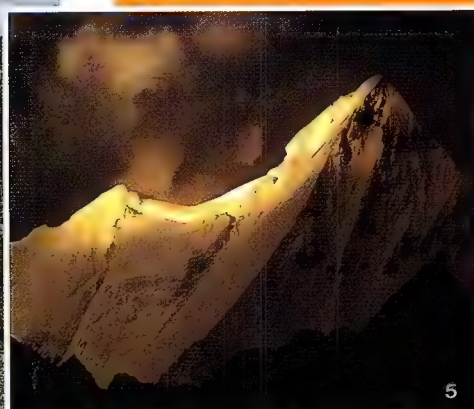
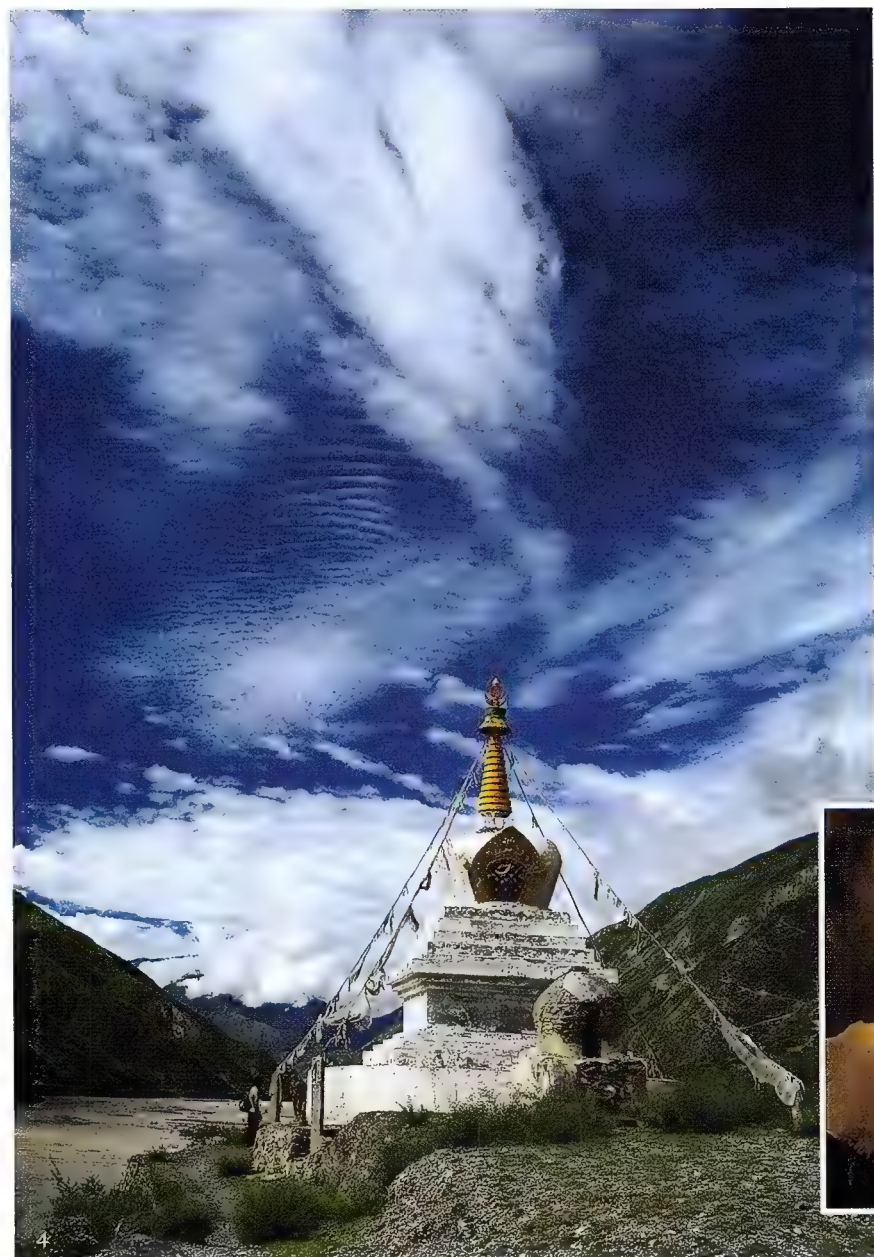


slope here, you can enjoy a panoramic view of the Bamda Grassland and its quietly meandering river. The average elevation of this flat and fertile land is 4,200 metres. In the

morning, as the sun casts its golden rays on the bun-shaped hill, the cattle begin to graze leisurely on the slope, presenting a tranquil and peaceful scene.

Translated by F. Huang

1. A panoramic view of the vast marshland
(by Wang Dajun)
2. A Guozhuang dance party held in the courtyard
of a Tibetan household (by Hong Lan)
3. The beautiful scenery of Markam (by
Zheng Ligang)
4. A white pagoda standing by the Nujiang
River in Batang (by Lin Jinghua)
5. The Holy Mountain in Daocheng at dusk
(by Li Yuan)



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SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY

XINDUQIAO—DĚGĚ—BAMDA

(NORTHERN ROUTE)

Article by Zeng Chengdong

Xinduqiao — Tagong Monastery — Yala Snow Mountain

Though Xinduqiao is a one-street town, it is nevertheless the major junction of the northern and southern Sichuan-Tibet routes. Early in the morning, the fog floated slowly and gently halfway up the mountain, cloaking it in a gauze-like shroud. The rays of the morning sun gave the mountains a warm golden hue. In the stream running by the road, some people were panning for gold; some of them are Han people from the inland areas.

Groups of Tibetans are often seen walking along the road on a pilgrimage to the Tagong Monastery. Many Tibetans travel a long way from the grassland to pay

homage to the Buddha at this major monastery. They may put up tents to stay for a few days. Behind the monastery is a "forest" of over 100 large and small pagodas. Chanting the six-character adage non-stop, the Tibetans walk clockwise around the monastery and pagodas. Each round takes quite a long time. They also make tiny clay Buddhist images called *caca* in Tibetan. It is believed that one has to make as many as 100,000 images to show one's piety.

The Kangba people are hospitable and unrestrained. Born singers and dancers, they are also skilled in business. They usually first invite you to have a rest in their tents and offer you a free bowl of buttered

tea, which is particularly nice when you are thirsty. Then they show you their products — Tibetan knives, Buddhist images, Chinese caterpillar fungus (*Cordyceps sinensis*) and

Sichuan fritillary bulb. The local kids are naive and lovely, and not shy in front of the camera.

(Tip: Better bring some candy and little souvenirs for the Tibetan kids, particularly if you take pictures of them.)

Yala Snow Mountain in the Tagong area, called Dapao (Cannon) Mountain by the local people, is snow-capped year round. Many Tibetans pay homage to it, for peace and safety. The snow mountain, green grassland and magnificent monastery give Tagong its fairyland appearance.

Dawu — Luhuo — Luoguo Liangzi — Garzê

Going northward from Tagong, we soon arrived at Dawu, meaning colt in Tibetan, the





county seat with a topography resembling a horse. On our way, we passed Bamei and saw some huge tracts of magnificent stone forests that have not yet been opened for tourism. The red and white, two-storey folk houses in Bamei are unique. Various fresh flowers cover the spacious balconies, giving them a villa-style look.

Into Luhuo County, we travelled along the Xianshui River. Formerly, the county was called Huoer Zhanggu, which means

"Mongolians on cliff". It acquired this name because the local chieftain's official residence was on the cliff up a mountain. From Luhuo to Garzê, we traversed the high Luoguo Liangzi Mountain. It is said that robbers steal goods off the back of slow-moving trucks crossing this mountain. Drivers dare not stop even if they notice what is happening. Nevertheless, the mountain's scenery is very beautiful. Halfway up is a highland lake as blue as sapphire. On the flat

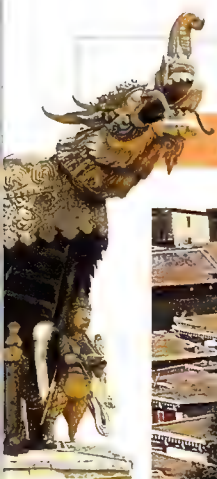


mountaintop we saw fertile grassland, herdspeople's tents and yaks. These Tibetans are very hospitable and treat all visitors with buttered tea. But communication is a problem since they rarely speak anything but Tibetan.

On the other side of the mountain is the county seat of Garzê, an important town on this northern route. There is a prosperous market in town. Many large temples have been built here since the time of the Fifth



1. Travelling through the Quer Mountain in winter (by Wang Dajun)
2. Walking through the long corridor of prayer wheels (by Hong Lan)
3. Making small clay Buddhist images (by Zeng Chengdong)
4. A section of the northern Sichuan-Tibet Highway (by Hong Lan)



Dalai Lama and lamas of the Yellow Sect are often seen on the streets. Nearly every local family sends one male member to a lamasery, and he depends on his family for food and living. The Kangba

Tibetan families here have more yaks and sheep than other places — the wealthy ones have over 1,000 heads and even a poor family has dozens of them. However, the herds do not represent the total of their wealth. In some families, the women's ornaments may cost as much as one million yuan. Wearing all kinds of gold, silver and pearl jewels, the pig-tailed Kangba women mostly look beautiful.



Maniganggo — Xinlu Lake — Quer Mountain — Degé

At Maniganggo, also called Yulong, the highway divides — one leads to Yushu in Qinghai Province through Shiqu County and the other goes over the Quer Mountain into Tibet. The Sichuan-Tibet Highway maintenance squads have built stations every 10 kilometres from here to Lhasa. This very small town has one inn offering both dining and lodging, but due to poor food and conditions, the high altitude and bad climate,

few drivers stay here.

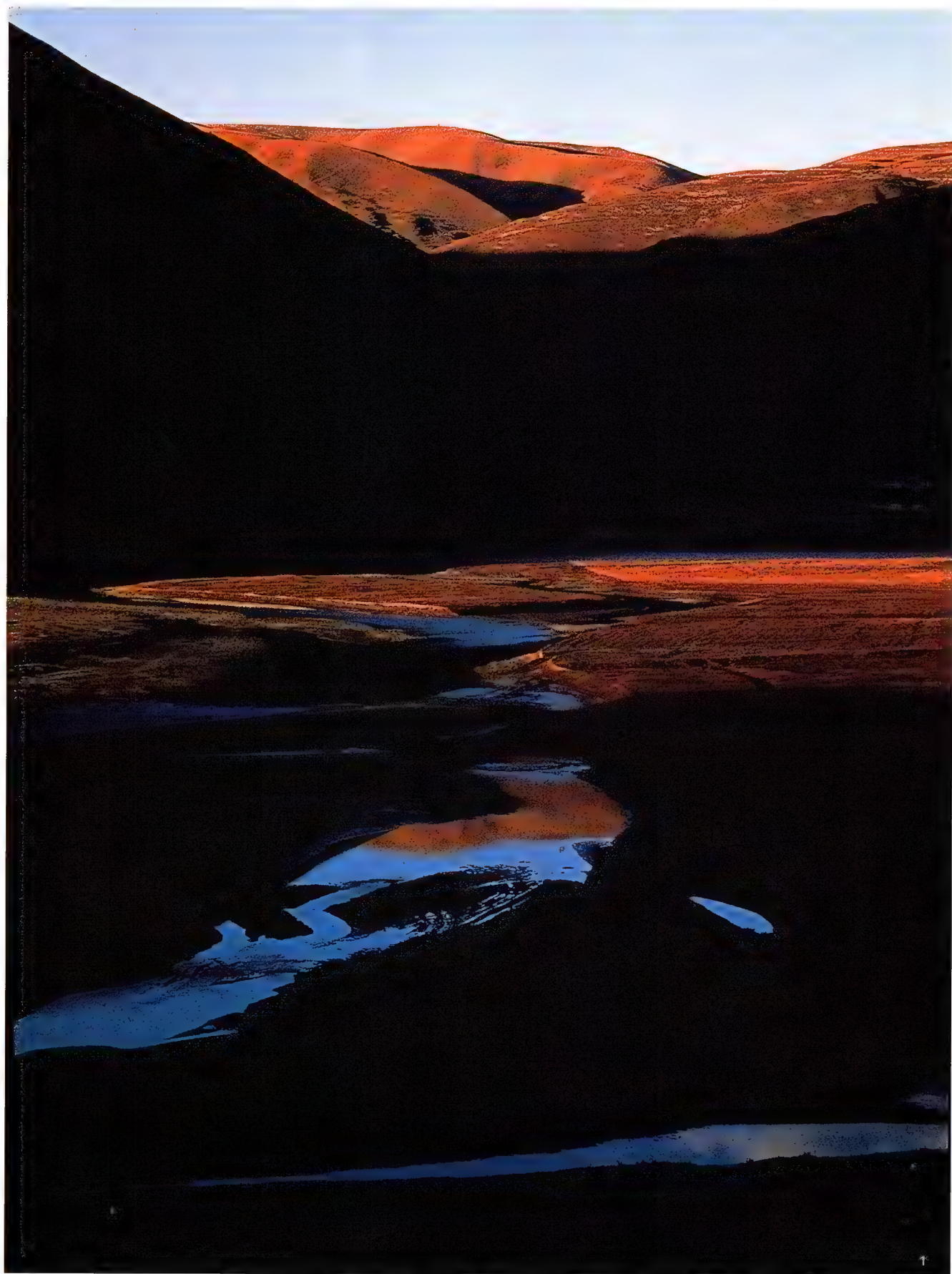
The Quer Mountain is the highest point on this northern route. Near to the second maintenance station, at about 4,000 metres altitude, is an extremely beautiful lake named

1. Neat and unique residential houses in Dawu (by Wang Dajun)
2. A girl in Bamei (by Lin Jinghua)
3. Tibetan Opera is performed at major religious ceremonies and during festivals. (by Lin Jinghua)
4. Young ladies from Dawu in their festive best (by Lin Jinghua)
5. Huiyuan Temple in Bamei (by Lin Jinghua)





SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY: XIJIAOQIAO - DAXIAOQIAO





Xinlu (New Road). Formed by water from several glaciers on the Quer Mountain, it is considered as a holy lake by the local people. It takes about half an hour to walk from the highway to the lake.

(Tip: Do not walk alone, particularly in the morning, because there are wolves here.)

We crossed two rivers to reach the Xinlu Lake. One has an arched bridge while the other is shallow enough to cross on its protruding stones. The lake is elegant and somewhat mysterious in the morning fog. It is as flat and calm as a mirror, reflecting the snow-covered peaks of Quer. The glaciers stretch right into the lake. Tibetan Buddhist sutras have been carved and coloured red on the huge rocks around the lake. Numerous prayer flags flap in the wind in a circle by the lake. Through the mouth on the one side not flanked by mountains, water flows into the Yalong River.

Quer Mountain is quite famous. At the mountain pass a sign states: Top of Quer

1. Yalong River bathed in early morning rays (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. A pasture in Shiqu (by Lin Jinghua)
3. A monastery on the bank of the Yalong River (by Zeng Chengdong)
4. People gather to participate in the religious ceremony. (by Lin Jinghua)
5. Sacrifices contributed at the ceremonial gathering (by Lin Jinghua)



Shiqu Monastery in Shiqu County

Though not on the Sichuan-Tibet highway, Shiqu County, which is 219 kilometres north of Muzonggong and bordering Yushu County in Qinghai Province, is worth a visit. It is an important passage from Sichuan into Northwest China. This county of 25,141 square kilometres and a population of 60,000 has an average less than three people per square kilometre of land.

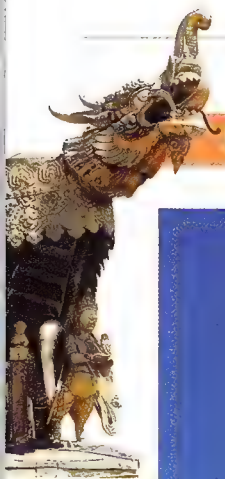
Shiqu is little known to outsiders, but its landscape is unique and beautiful, and its folk customs rich and colourful. Visitors often regard it as "Sichuan secluded from the dusty world". Shiqu's Tibetan name is "Drope Karo", meaning rock on Yalong River. Shiqu is so called also because of the Shiqu Monastery in the county, which sounds the same in Tibetan.

The Shiqu Monastery was built in 1160 and has about 100 buildings that stand on an east-west line in a huge compound. Every year in April, the monastery holds a week-long grand Buddhist ceremony to pray for prosperity of the Buddhist land for one for the state and the people, and peace for the world.

At the 103,020 (about two million) people crowd the long square as well as the mountain slopes at the time.

webmaster





Mountain, 4,916 metres altitude. The maintenance squad stationed here is the highest one on the Sichuan-Tibet Highway.

We travelled down the mountain to Dêgê, nestled in a great mountain valley at 3,000 metres. There were gold diggers on both banks of the swift river running between the ominous razor-sharp cliffs here. The town is best known for the Dêgê Sutra Printing House built in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Other places of interest include the Babang and Zhuqing monasteries.

Jomda — Toba — Qamdo — Bamda

From Dêgê to the Jinsha River the road runs alongside a small river. The Jinsha River, with huge mountains covered with thick vegetation towering over both banks, did not seem as great as I imagined. We crossed the river into Jomda County in Tibet. The look of the people here is different — not as tall and strong as the Kangbas. The Wala Temple by the highway here has 200 lamas.

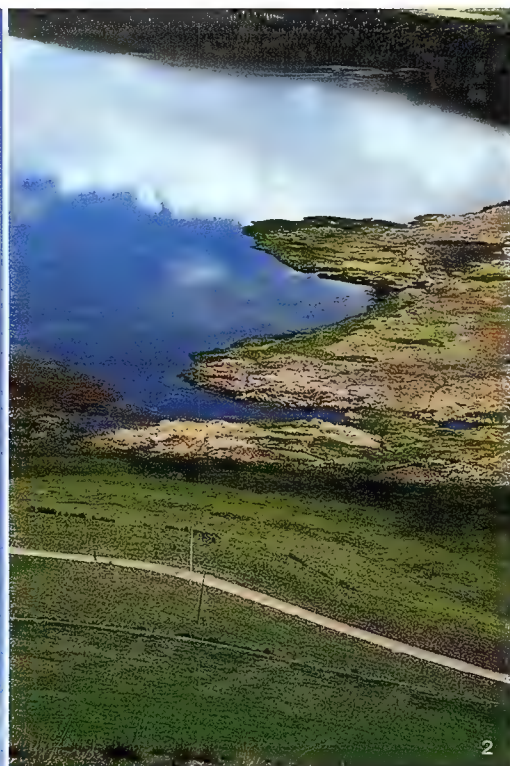
Next comes Toba County, where the roadside rocks have a golden yellow colour,

indicating an abundance of minerals. Toba has many hot springs in the mountains. The Tibetan pilgrims all bathe here on their way to Lhasa.

(Tip: Those who are not used to a dry climate should avoid hot spring baths because the drying effect can make the skin feel extremely itchy.)

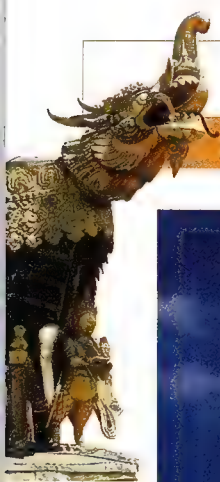
Toba also has a unique highland scale-less fish. Most drivers prefer to eat this reasonably priced fish in a restaurant run by Sichuan natives.

After Toba, we crossed several big mountains. If you are healthy, take a walk on



1. Devoted pilgrims (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. The highland lake of Luoguo Liangzi (by Zeng Chengdong)
3. Erdao Lake on Quer Mountain at 4,000 metres above sea level (by Zeng Chengdong)
4. A workshop of the Dêgê Sutra Printing House (by Zhang Jinneng)
5. Work goes on in the printing house. (by Zhang Jinneng)





SICHUAN TIBET HIGHWAY: XINKE DIAO ——— DAXIMA





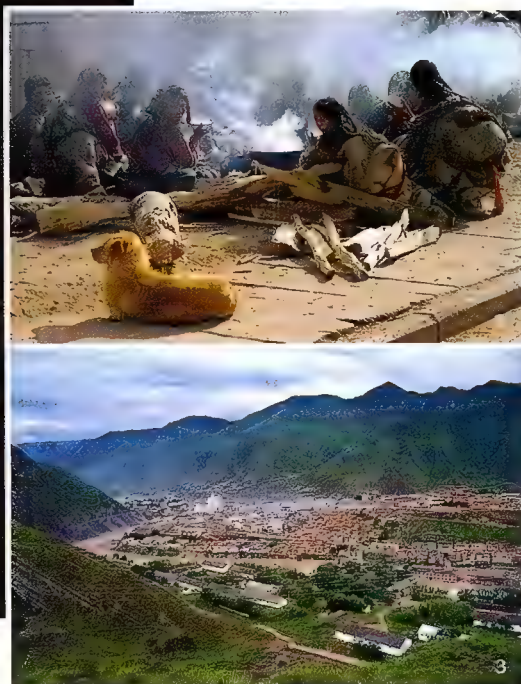
top of mountains that are over 4,000 metres high and enjoy the magnificent view. Qamdo is an important town in eastern Tibet and also the centre of the Kangba region. The golden top of the Qambalin Monastery in Qamdo shines in the sun. The highway here again divides into two: one runs through Riwoqê and Nagqu to Lhasa while the other goes through Bamda, Rawu and Boni to Lhasa.

Near Qamdo there are some well-preserved Karub ruins that cover a large area. They are one of the three major ruins of ancient Tibetan culture, and include large numbers of relics from the Neolithic Period.

Crossing the Langla Mountain Pass, at 4,572 metres altitude, we arrived at Bamda, the junction of the northern and southern Sichuan-Tibet Highways.



1. Bamda in the early morning (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. On a street of Qamdo (by Wang Dajun)
3. Qamdo, an important town in eastern Tibet (by Zeng Chengdong)



SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY

BAMDA—LHASA

Article by Zeng Chengdong

Nujiang Mountain — Anjiula Mountain — Rawu Lake

Leaving Bamda, we struggled up to the 5,000-metre high pass over the Nujiang Mountain, which is considered as the Hengduan Mountains' most dangerous natural barrier and the highest mountain on the Sichuan-Tibet Highway. Its top is barren, without a single blade of grass in sight. The road makes an incredible series of 72 huge twists and turns here, more than any other section on this route. The Nujiang River roars along in the valley below. Mudslides often block the road. In fact, walking down the mountain following a trail is quicker than driving on the road. We ran through several villages on the way to the valley bottom at 2,700 metres above sea level. The Nujiang Bridge leads the way towards Tibet.

Located on the other side of the bridge is Baxoi, whose name means "mountain foot village for the gallant" in Tibetan. The "split-belly" fish found in the river here is a famous delicacy. We then climbed up to the Anjiula Mountain Pass at 4,250 metres and saw a highland lake. Halfway along the valley is an exceptionally narrow section which is barely wide enough for a small vehicle. Moreover, most of the roadbed is propped up with logs. Looking down is definitely not recommended, for the valley seems bottomless.

Out of the valley, we saw Rawu Lake lying by the highway, at 3,800 metres above sea level. Completely untouched by humans, its scenery is natural and beautiful, with thousand-year-old salix magnolias lining its banks. About 26 kilometres long and one to five kilometres wide, the lake is the headwater of the Parlun Zangbo River. The local people say

that there is a monster as large as a hippopotamus living in the lake and it kills yaks grazing nearby. Nevertheless, with numerous holy peaks and lamaseries standing around it, the lake is considered holy. Legend says that the Buddhist master Tsong Khapa once stayed in retreat in a mountain cave here. Pilgrims often throng

the monastery built to commemorate the event. Thanks to the warm current from the Bay of Bengal, the area is covered with thriving grassland and crop fields resemble those of southern China. However, crops of rice, wheat and vegetables do not grow there, perhaps because of the high altitude. A restaurant by the lake does good business and seems to be the centre of this Shangri-La.

Through the valley, the Rawu Lake water flows into the Parlun Zangbo River. Following the river, passing slopes covered with tall trees, we reached Bomi, where the air suddenly became more humid.



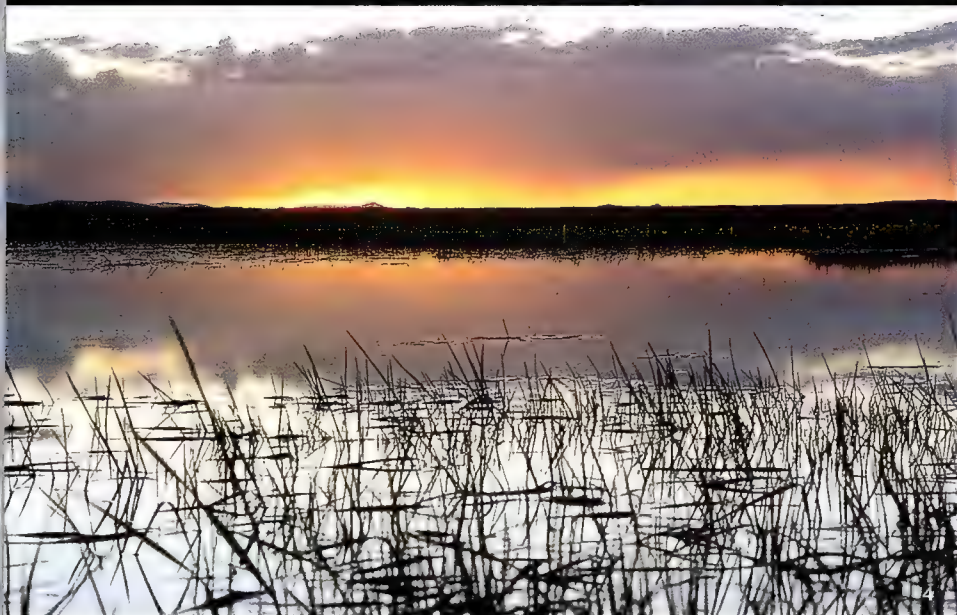
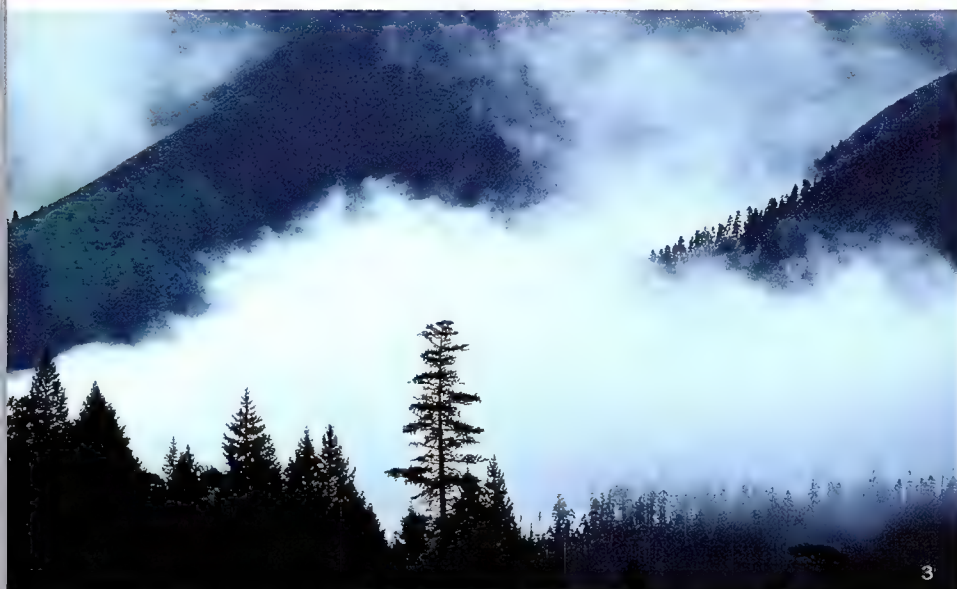
Bomi – Tangmai – Yigong – Pailung Natural Barrier

Bomi is where the ancient Bomi Kingdom was established. People of the Monba, Lhoba and Deng ethnic groups live here. Bomi boasts the most primitive and largest forest in the world and also is home to tigers. Recently, the Yarlung Zangbo Canyon, the largest of its kind in the world, was discovered in the county too.

From Bomi to Bayi, the highway runs over extremely dangerous terrain where landslides sometimes occur. In Tangmai, there is even a section called the "death route". In fine weather, from the Tangmai

Bridge, at 2,100 metres altitude, you can see the Jialabeilei Peak, which is 7,151 metres above sea level. Due to the changing weather and frequent mist, this snow-capped peak rarely shows itself.

1. The Yarlung Zangbo River at dusk (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. The charming scenery of the forest farm in Lhonang (by Zeng Chengdong)
3. Yarlung Zangbo River Valley covered in mist (by Zeng Chengdong)
4. There are numerous nameless lakes as beautiful as this one. (by Zeng Chengdong)
5. The Dengba people (by Wang Dajun)
6. Zayü in Tibet is known as the "southern China in Tibet". (by Wang Dajun)



Dengba People

The Dengba, or Deng people, call themselves Darang or Ge'man, while the Tibetans address them as Deriyi. For generations, the Dengba have lived in the Zayü area, which has been known as "southern China in Tibet". It is a fertile land with a pleasant climate. Wild bears, monkeys and leopards roam its sub-tropical forests.

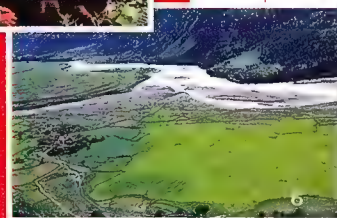
Long ago, the Dengba made a living by slash-and-burn cultivation. They grew corn, collected wild mountain fruits and grew opium to trade for goods. Nowadays, with more advanced farming tools they have built terraced fields on the slopes and greatly improved their living standard. Over the past few decades, they have gradually moved down to the flatland in the river valleys.

Dengba women wear long drum-like earrings and necklaces of beads, a strip of cloth covering the forehead, and long skirts. The men coil long black kerchiefs over their heads and wear silver earrings.

The Dengba do not have fixed festivals, but they show great respect to ghosts. They believe that everything has a soul. Whenever someone gets sick or dies, a ceremony is held to send off the ghost. Animals are slaughtered and necromancers are invited to chant and perform dances with cutting and stabbing movements.

The Dengba have their own spoken language, which belongs to the Tibetan-Burmese family, but no written language. So, they make records using cuts on timber or grass sticks. Primary schools have now been set up to teach their children Tibetan. The Dengba are strongly influenced by the bon tradition and show a very primitive spirit of mutual help and sharing.

Basically, the Dengba are monogamous. Usually, the man sends someone to seek a girl's hand by telling her the grain and number of yaks he owns. There are no fixed wedding ceremonial rites. Married women do not have any rights in the disposal of the family's property.





SICHUAN-TIBET HIGHWAY: BAMDA—LHASA



Even when it does, the view only lasts a few minutes.

(Tip: Tangmai Bridge is at a crossroad. When a landslide occurs, people get lifts there. As there are few buses, trucks and tractors also help those in urgent need.)

Ten kilometres past the bridge is the village called Pailung Menba, which is the start of the Yarlung Zangbo Canyon. In 1993, Chinese geologists and professors from Arizona University, USA, set out from here to survey the canyon, and many villagers served as their porters. The American professors

thus became the first foreigners with Chinese official permission to enter the Mêdog County. In the next few years, more scientists and explorers entered the canyon for geological surveys.

Having passed the Tangmai Bridge, the highway forks again. The trunk line runs to Nyingchi, and the branch leads to Yigong. The tea farms in Yigong are extremely beautiful. In addition, there are lakes and mountains with iron mines. During World War II, the US Flying Tigers flew over Yigong across the Himalayas in





the Hump Line operation to bring war supplies to China. A few years ago, plane wreckage was found in this area.

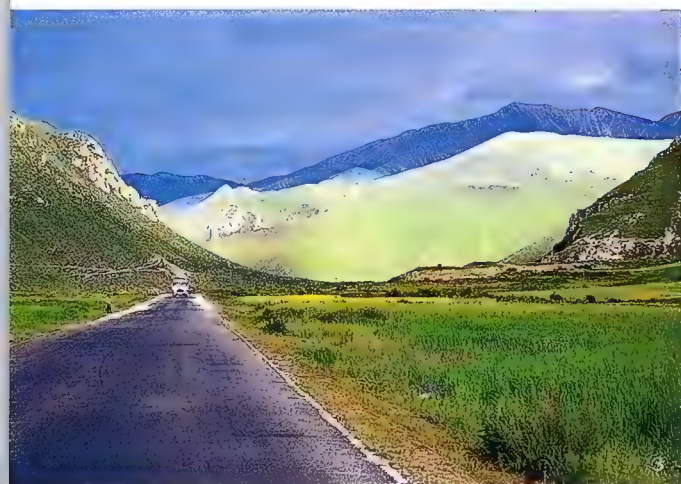
The Tangmai Bridge sits at the confluence of the Parlung Zangbo and Yigong Zangbo rivers, which give rise to roaring whirlpools. By the bridge, sheer cliffs tower into sky and form an imposing scene commonly known as the Pailung Natural Barrier.

(Tip: Travellers to Yigong must return to the main route by the same road. There are few motor vehicles running here.)

Nyingchi – Bayi – Gongbo'gyamda – Lhasa

About five kilometres southeast of Nyingchi is the beautiful Taohuagou (Peach Flower Gully). This valley, covered with lush trees and with streams running down from the slopes, is quiet and charming. Wild peach flowers are everywhere, seemingly advertising where "paradise" is.

1. The beautiful spring scenes of Bomi (by Cao Tie)
2. A highland lake in Baxoi (by Wang Dajun)
3. The highway going through Bomi (by Zheng Ligang)
4. Rawu Lake is surrounded by luxuriant greenery, despite its altitude of 4,200 metres. (by Zeng Chengdong)
5. A woman of Gongbo'gyamda coming back from a market (by Zheng Ligang)





Lhonang is a very beautiful place that boasts magnificent snow-capped mountain peaks, grassland, forests and streams, and produces quality cattle. In fine weather here you can see the Namjagbarwa Peak. Its name means "spear that spikes the blue sky" in Tibetan. The peak is also known as the "father of all icy mountains". At its foot, however, the numerous hot springs and verdant palms give a deep impression of tropical area.

Bayi is one of the most prosperous cities in Tibet. It is a trade centre frequented by Monbas, Lhobas and Tibetans as well as Han people. The Nyingchi Woolen Textile Mill moved from Shanghai is the largest enterprise in town.

Once again, the highway splits in two here. One runs to Mainling along the Yarlung Zangbo River and leads north through

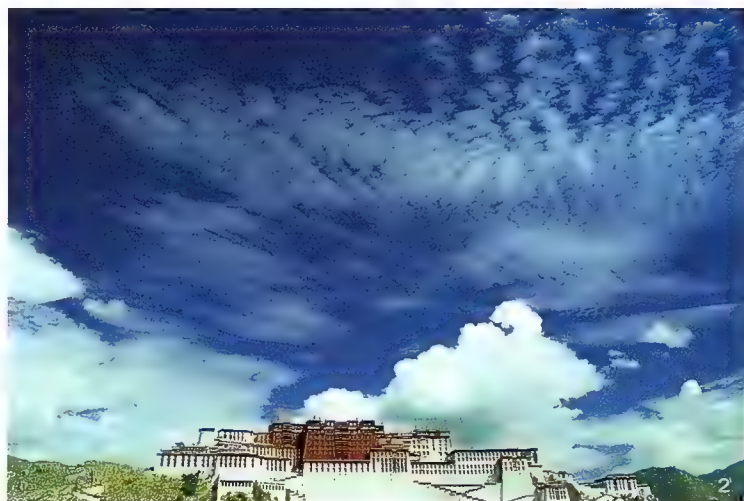
Qūxū to Lhasa. Turning north at Dapai, about 90 kilometres east of Mainling, you can reach Gêga, from where you can walk to the Namjagbarwa Peak base camp at 3,512 metres altitude.

The other road runs through Gongbo'gyamda to Lhasa. We chose this route, as do many travellers, because it is somewhat shorter. We drove alongside the pretty Nyang River, which gradually turned into a stream, indicating we were close to the

river source. The countless cypress trees over 1,000 years old growing on both banks are said to have been planted by Tang Princess Wencheng and Tibetan King Songstan Gambo when they got married. Orchards are scattered along the river, producing very large apples, pears and peaches.

From Gongbo'gyamda to Lhasa, the highway runs through extremely barren mountains with few villages until it reaches Lhasa. From the distance we could see the

golden tops of the Potala Palace gleaming under the sun. The mysterious atmosphere of Lhasa could be felt even before we actually arrived there.



1. Gazê Temple on the bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. The Potala Palace (by Zeng Chengdong)
3. People rushing to the Drepung Monastery on the day of Sunning the Buddha (by Zeng Chengdong)





TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Hint No. 1: Hot Spring Bathing

Along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway, there are many hot springs. Remember the following before taking a hot spring bath:

- Beware of their varying temperatures and test the water temperature carefully before you bath in one.
- Move gradually from lower to higher temperature pools.
- When your mouth feels dry, get out of the water immediately, and rest and drink some fresh water.
- The water has a rich mineral content and a shower with clear water is satisfying.

Caution: After bathing in a hot spring, drivers should rest for two hours or more before sitting at the wheel again.

Hint No. 2: Survival in the Wild

Take any public transport or offer of a lift that is available, even a field tractor, animal-drawn cart or donkey, rather than walk alone with luggage, unless there is really no choice.

To survive in the wild, you should prepare properly beforehand and know how to make a fire. It is not so easy to make a fire on the grassland; the major fuel is dried cow or sheep dung and dry grass. Once the fire is started, place rocks around it to support your cooking pot (a small aluminum pot is a must for such travel).

Search for a campsite a

few hours before sunset so you have time to collect sufficient fuel. Sometimes you can find an old campsite used by the herdspeople who move around several times in a year. Or you can camp on the grassland or under a stone cliff, as long as it is close to water. Avoid camping on dried riverbeds or under earthen cliffs to prevent accidents. Before going to sleep, add sufficient fuel to the fire so it will burn all night on its own. A blazing fire provides warmth and scares away wild animals.

In summer, edible wild mushrooms, day lilies and Asiatic plantain are available on the grassland everywhere. They are very delicious, especially when cooked together with ham or tinned meat.

(Article by Hu Zongxiang)

Hint No. 3: Dealing with Tibetan Dogs

Tibetan dogs, one of the best species in the world, can grow to calf-size, and are vigilant and ferocious. Nearly every herder family has such dogs. The dogs will run up and bite strangers. This is the

biggest headache for travellers going into areas inhabited by Tibetans. So, you must be prepared with a weapon to repel the dogs. The most effective and portable weapon is something called "dog-beating club" — a 300-gram iron rod tied to a solid four-metre rope.

If chancing upon a Tibetan dog while walking, remember not to show any fear or run, and don't expect the dog's master to help you either. Swirl your club immediately and quickly with your own body as the axis. At the same time, gradually let the rope loosen to increase the radius of the swirling club. The dogs will normally retreat. They will bark from a distance but dare not chase you because most have experienced a beating with such a weapon.

(Article by Hu Zongxiang)

Hint No. 4: Courtesy

Regardless whether or not you understand the language or know the customs, first of all you should respect the Tibetans. It is a taboo to speak impolitely, show no respect or tell lies. It is particularly so when you enter a tent in a remote grassland area to ask for directions, beg for lodging or ask for food. All Tibetan lads are fairly proud of themselves and most of them smoke. If you present them with cigarettes, lighters or

other small gifts, they will readily offer you help.

Tibetan women, particularly in remote areas, are rather shy in front of strangers. A male traveller should never speak or act frivolously, or be rude to them. Among groups of Tibetan men and women, you should greet the men first so as to avoid any misunderstanding.

The Tibetans have many taboos. For





instance, in a tent, men should sit to the right of the stove and women to the left. Usually, there are no chairs or stools in the tent, so everyone sits cross-legged on ox hides, lamb skins, or felt. Remember, never refuse to sit because of the dirtiness. When the hosts serve you food, such as butter tea or roasted barley flour, you should accept it with delight even if it does not appear very clean. Never refuse anything or frown in front of the hosts. After sunset never approach a herdsman's tent to ask for lodging, for some think a tired person from a long journey brings bad luck. Do not take pictures or stand and look right in front of people doing prostrations. Never turn the prayer wheels in the wrong direction.

(Article by Hu Zongxiang)

Transport

- Several unscheduled long-distance buses run each week from Chengdu (near the Tibet Hotel on Renmin Road North) to Lhasa. Ticket costs 450 yuan.
- Two unscheduled buses run each week from Chengdu to Tibet along the Qamdo and Nyingchi line.
- A daily bus service runs from Chengdu (Xin Nanmen Bus Station) to Kangding and Garzê.
- Two to seven buses run each week from the Kangding Bus Station to Batang, Litang, Dêgê and Garzê.
- Bus service is available between the counties in Tibet.

- The best way to travel in this area is to hire a jeep. The cost is usually between 500 and 1,500 yuan a day, but in certain emergency situations, such as road collapse, it may rise to 3,000 yuan a day.
- Hitchhiking is common on this route. To find a ride, search transport centres, hotels, restaurants and gas stations. Trucks registered in Sichuan have licence numbers starting with 20, 50, or 80; those registered in Tibet start with 23 or 53. Small groups are best as each truck has only two seats. After negotiating the price and destination with the driver, write down the licence number. When staying overnight, bring your luggage with you; do not leave it on the truck. Under normal conditions, it takes 7-10 days to drive from Chengdu to Lhasa; with stops, you need more than 20 days. When a road collapse happens, you may have to wait, detour or continue your journey on foot or horseback.

Lodging

- Star-rated hotels or well-equipped guesthouses are available at major stops on the route. These include the Jinjiang Hotel**** and Minshan Hotel**** in Chengdu; Lhasa Hotel*** in Lhasa; Nyingchi Hotel** and Nyingchi Guesthouse in Nyingchi; Jinsui and Kangsheng hotels in Qamdo; Kangding Hotel in Kangding; Hailuoguo Jinshan Hotel in Luding; and Ya'an Hotel in Ya'an.

- Small inns and government reception houses are available in county seats, with prices varying from 10 yuan to 100 yuan.
- Inns in districts and townships are rustic. Where there are no inns, it's possible to stay overnight at the road-maintenance stations, military stations and Tibetans' homes, as long as you sincerely ask them for help.
- Get used to Tibetan food such as beef, mutton and butter tea. The latter is particularly important for travel on the highland because, beside quenching thirst and providing energy, it offers protection from cold and prevents your lips from cracking.
- While travelling, be sure to bring enough water and food. Eat fresh garlic to protect your stomach health.

Route and Altitude

The northern route is 2,412 kilometres; Quer Mountain at 5,200 metres above sea level is the highest point.

The southern route is 2,140 kilometres; the highest altitude is at Lilang, 4,700 metres above sea level.

1. At the foot of the Anjula Mountain (by Cao Tie)
2. The Milin River Valley (by Zeng Chengdong)
3. The Imposing Erlang Mountain (by Zeng Chengdong)





The colour yellow represented the authority and nobility of the emperors in ancient China. It was their exclusive privilege to wear this colour. An ordinary Chinese caught wearing yellow would be put to death. Yet in nature, there is a brilliant yellow that has always been beyond the realm of the ancient emperors — the rapeseed blossoms.

A YELLOW FLOWER TOUR

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

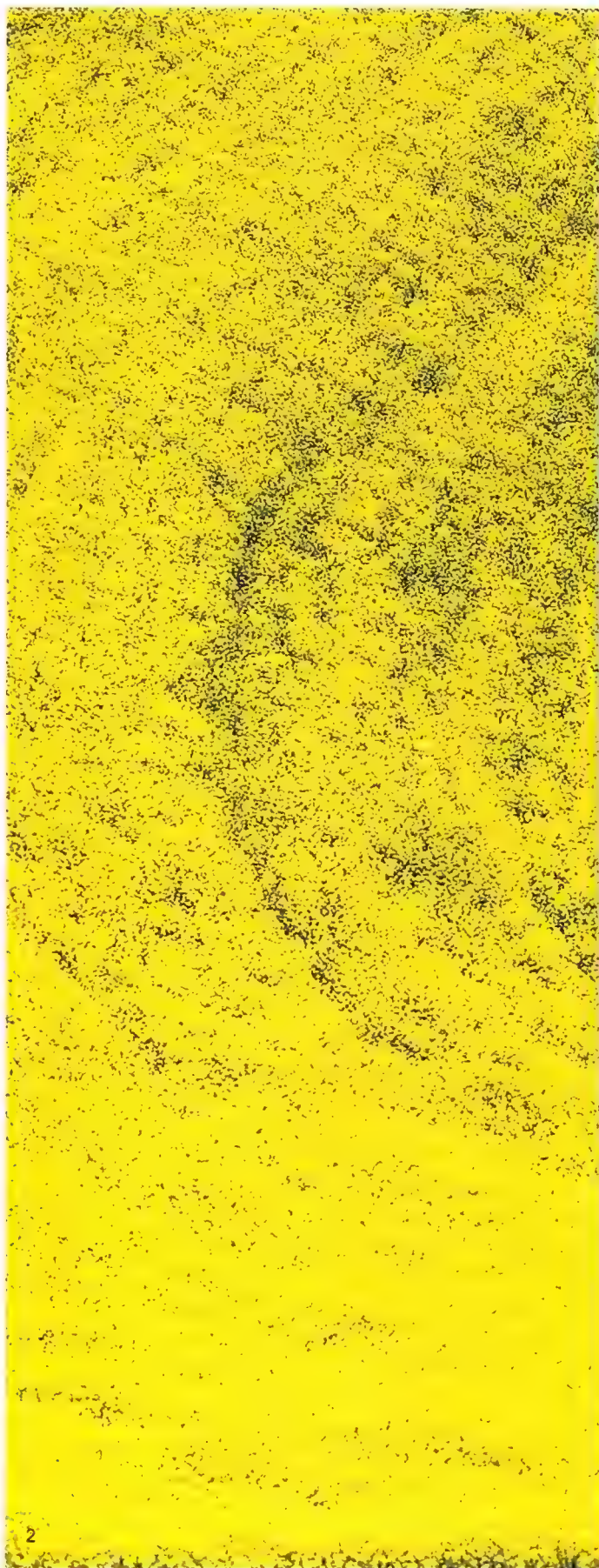
March in Luoping, Yunnan

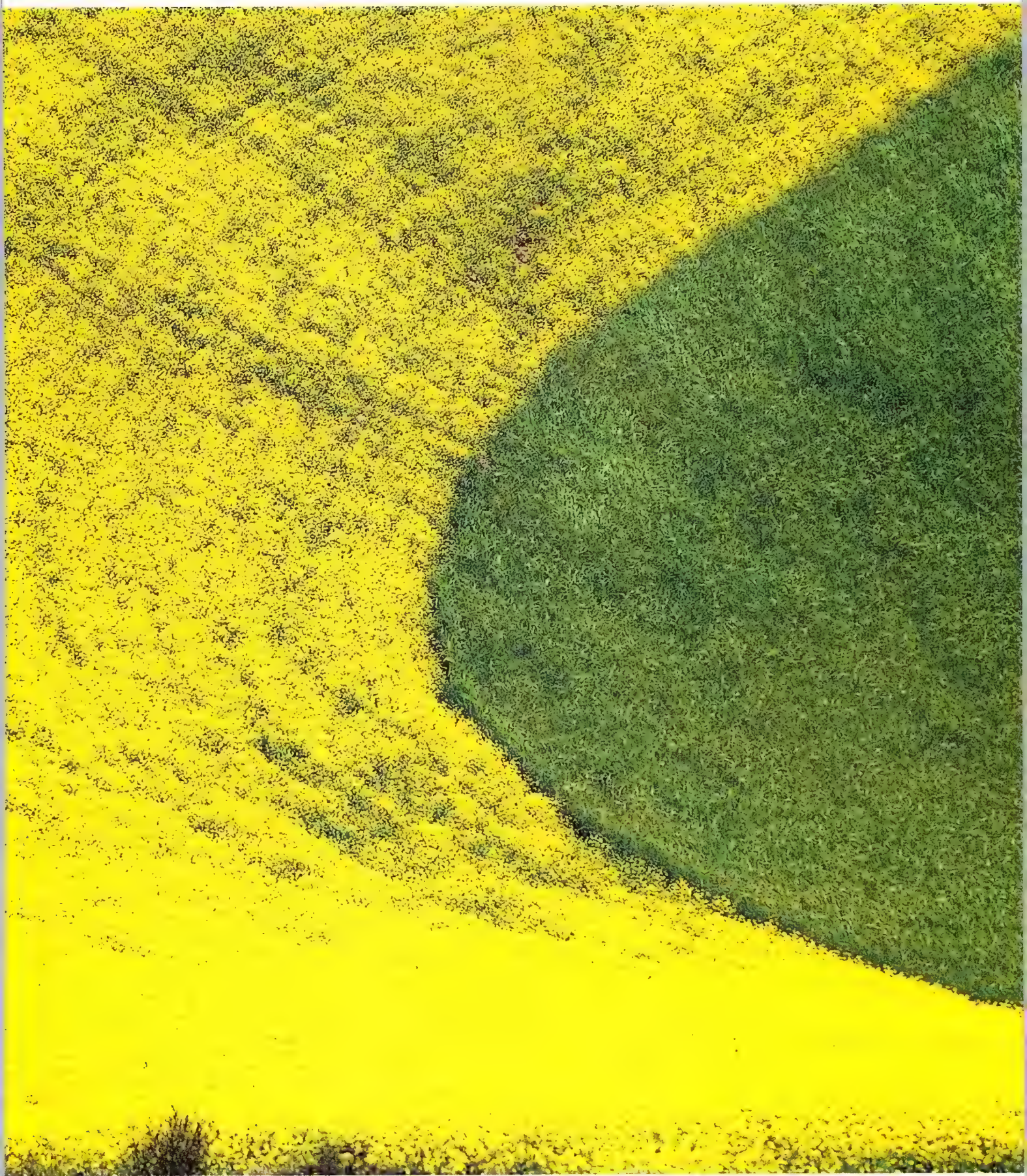
As spring begins, the top of the highland plain in Luoping offers a sweeping view of golden yellow. Some 9,300 hectares of rapeseed stretch dozens of kilometres towards the distant horizon. Like an ocean of dazzling molten gold, waves stirred by a morning breeze ripple across the rapeseed and toss fragrant petals into the air. Beekeepers from across the country travel here in spring to allow their little workers to gather the sweet nectar. After Luoping, the beekeepers move on to Zhejiang and Jiangsu in April, Shaanxi in May, and the Qinghai Plateau in June and July.

April in Waterside Towns, Southern China

During the period around the Qingming Festival, spring rains lightly bathe the areas south of the Yangtse River. This is a good

1. Beekeepers from all over the country gather in the sea of rapeseed flowers in Luoping. (by Li Zhixiong)
2. A unique attraction in Qinghai — vast expanse of rapeseed flowers around the Qinghai Lake setting against blue sky. (by Shi Baoxiu)







time to visit the ancient towns of Nanxun, Tongli and Zhouzhuang, set along the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. The best way is to sail along the waterways lined with classic-style houses with white walls and black tiles. Fields fed by the canals are aglow with rapeseed blossoms, offsetting the stark architecture.

May in Shaanxi

In May, rapeseed blossoms bring life and luxuriance to the Guanzhong Plain in Shaanxi. In Maoling and Qianling, west and northwest of Xi'an respectively, the rapeseed blossoms flow like honey over the undulating terrain. Maoling, the tomb of the Han Emperor Liu Che, is the largest burial site of that dynasty. Qianling is the tomb of Emperor Li Zhi, the third Tang ruler, and his empress,

Wu Zetian, the first Chinese woman to take the throne. Though not yet excavated, there are many cultural relics on the tomb ground.

June and July in Qinghai

By July, the rapeseed has already been harvested and processed in southern China. But on the Qinghai Plateau at 3,200 metres above sea level, it is the right season to see the yellow flowers in full bloom. Covering tens of thousands of hectares, the golden fields set against deep blue skies with snowcapped mountains on the horizon make a uniquely gorgeous scene. When you approach the rapeseed fields, the strong reflection of the yellow colour in the bright sun may make it hard to open your eyes.

Along Qinghai Lake's northwestern bank are two islands that host

migratory birds. In spring, a dozen species of birds fly in from southern China and Southeast Asia. April and May are best for bird-watching. These birds mate, lay eggs and hatch their young there until July. When the rapeseed flowers blossom, most of the birds have left, but visitors may still catch a glimpse of the seagulls since their young ones take longer than other migratory birds to learn to fly.

Tours to Qinghai Lake normally also head to Caka, 80 km west of the lake. Caka means "salt sea" in

Mongolian. From the distance, this brilliant sea of salt at the bases of snow-capped peaks resembles some polar lands. Sightseeing trains carry visitors deep into the salt flats, where all you see is powdered or crystallised salt. The 100-square-km area of Caka has salt reserves of 440 million tons, enough salt for the entire earth's population for half a century.



Translated by Jin Jianzhong



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1. During the Qingming Festival in April, rapeseed flowers in southern China bloom luxuriantly.
2. Rapeseed flowers in full bloom indicate the coming of spring.
3. Yellow flowers around Qinghai Lake (by Shi Baoxiu)
4. In April the Xin'an River at the foot of Huangshan Mountain also provides a beautiful scene of rapeseed flowers.
5. Spring is the best season to enjoy the yellow scenes in the ancient towns along the Grand Canal.
6. Luoping produces a quarter of the rapeseed oil consumed in Yunnan. (by Liu Jianhua)

Tips for the Traveller

◆ Luoping

Transport: Highways and the Nanning-Kunming Railway run through Luoping. Bus service is available from Kunming and Xingyi to Luoping. It is a four-hour, 240-km trip by train or bus from Kunming and a two-hour, 80-km trip from Xingyi, to Luoping.

Accommodation: Wuhuan, Lubuge and Wenhua hotels in Luoping: 140 to 200 yuan for a standard room.

◆ Southern China Towns

Transport: From Suzhou, it is a half-hour, 20-km ride to Zhouzhuang. Motorboats make the 20-minute journey between Zhouzhuang and Tongli.



Long-distance buses run between Tongli and Nanxun in Zhejiang, for a journey of one and a half hours.

Accommodation: Zhouzhuang, Tongli and Nanxun all have high-quality hotels charging around 200 yuan. Small inns are available for visitors who want to have a taste of living in a riverside house for only around 40 yuan per night.

◆ Shaanxi

Transport: Maoling is 45 km from Xi'an. Buses for one-day tours to Maoling start from the Xi'an Railway Station. One-day tours from Xi'an to Qianling in Liangshan, 80 km from Xi'an, are available.

Accommodation: Xi'an Zhonglou Hotel: 470 yuan for a double room.

◆ Qinghai Lake

Transport: Tours to Qinghai Lake are organised by hotels in Xining. A regular bus goes from Zhifang Street in the suburbs of Xining to Qinghai Lake and Caka. On the return trip, get off at the Heimahe stop to take a bus to the Bird Island. A hired minibus charges 300-500 yuan for a one-way trip or 600 yuan for a round-trip.

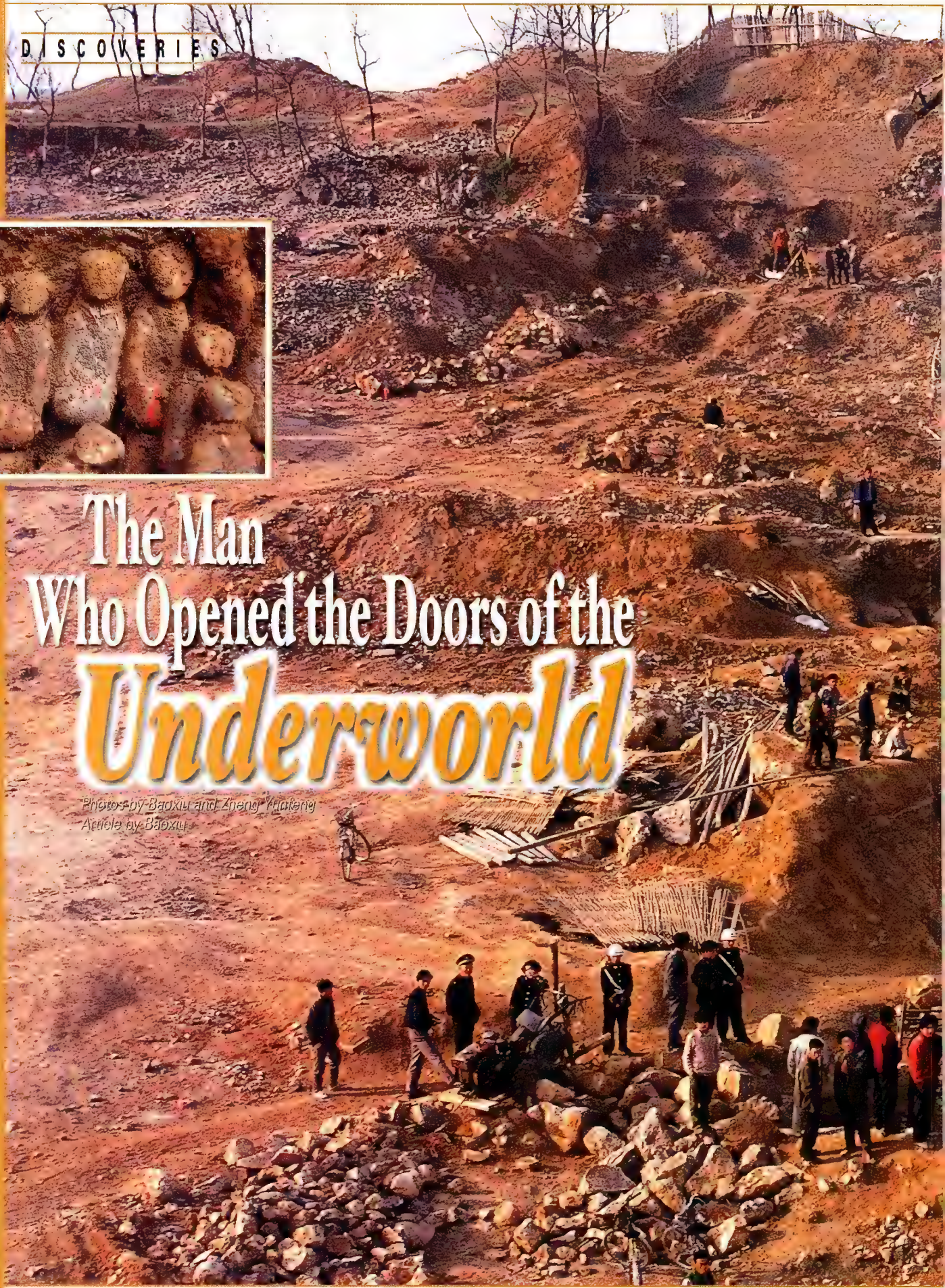
Accommodation: Qinghai Hotel, Xining: standard room: 200 to 300 yuan. Qinghai Lake Tent Hotel: standard room: 200 yuan; dormitory: 30 yuan.

DISCOVERIES

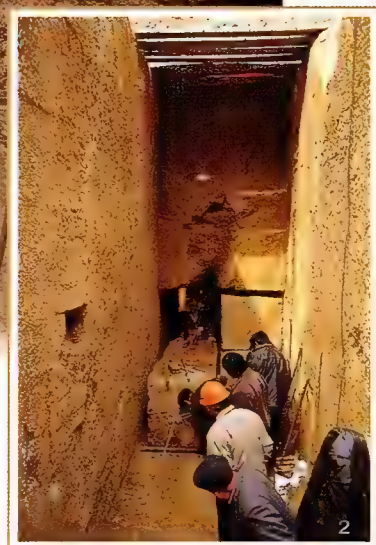
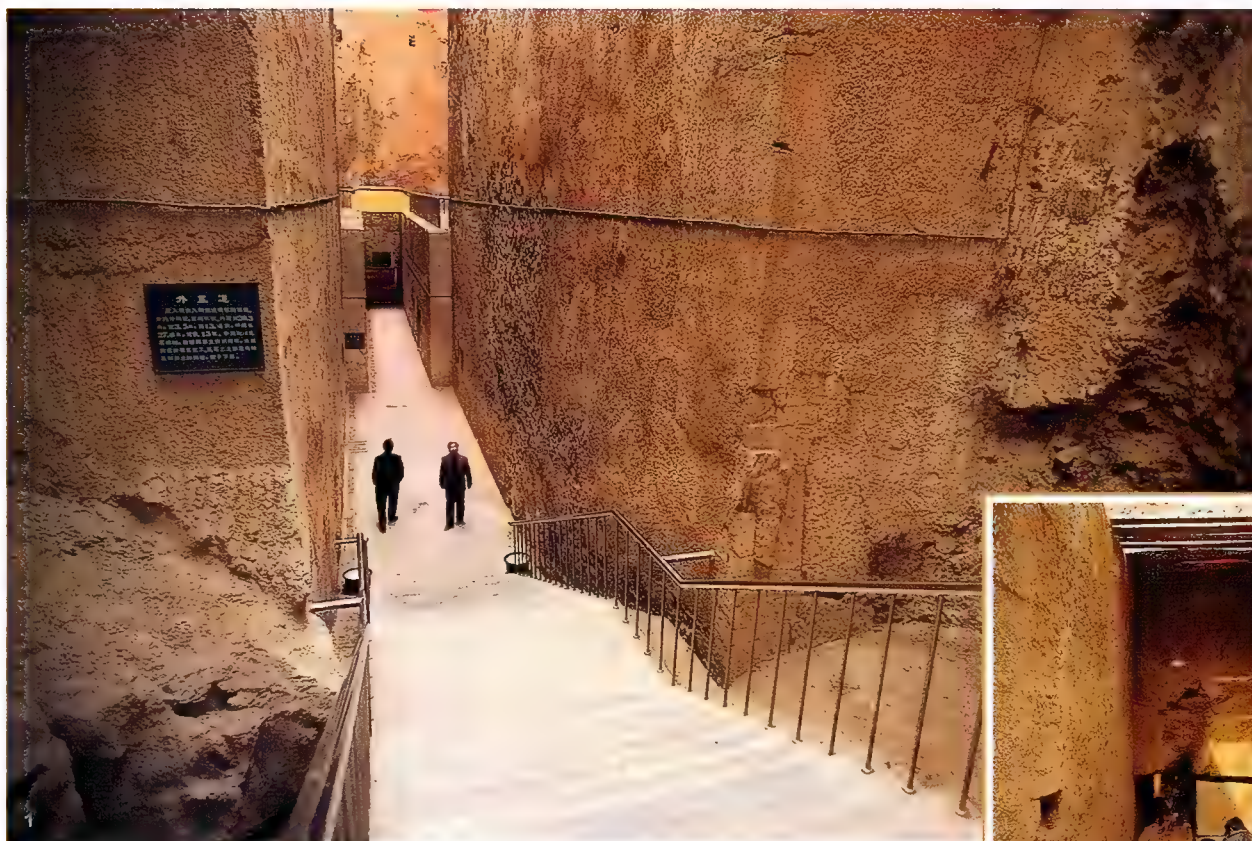


The Man Who Opened the Doors of the *Underworld*

Photos by Baoxiu and Zheng Yufeng
Article by Baoxiu







I had always believed that the underworld existed only in old tales. During my recent visit to Xuzhou, I realised there really are places like that. In Xuzhou there are imperial tombs of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) that are built like underground palaces with complex layouts and dark gloomy interiors. Unlike the imperial tombs in other places, those in Xuzhou are buried deep in the mountains without leaving any marker above ground. It is an arduous and almost impossible task to find them. The key person who helped complete this significant task is none other than Wang Kai, curator of the Xuzhou Museum of Han-Dynasty Pottery Warriors and Horses.

An Outstanding Archaeologist

Born into a peasant family in a village in Peixian County, Jiangsu Province, in the late 1930s, Wang Kai enrolled in Beijing (Peking) University's History Department in 1958, majoring in archaeology. Upon graduation five years later, he worked at the Luoyang Museum in Henan Province for 14 years and participated in the excavation of more than 100 ancient tombs.

In 1977 he moved to Xuzhou in his home province and continued the exploration and excavation of ancient tombs. Since the tombs in this area are all in the mountains and unmarked, only a small part of them had been discovered.

On his second day in Xuzhou, he went with a colleague to see an excavated Han tomb on a hill. Afterwards, he climbed to the top of the hill and saw some important geomantic signs — the Yunlong

(Cloud and Dragon) Mountain in the south and the Xima (Horse Game) Mountain in the north — and realised that this would have been a favourable place

for ancient imperialist rulers to build their tombs. He figured that there should be a larger imperial tomb hidden deep in the mountains. His prediction came true when an archaeological team worked for 30 days and found the Tomb No. 2 on Tushan Hill.

The Discovery of the Pottery Warriors and Horses

On December 5, 1984, when a bulldozer of the Xuzhou Brickyard was moving earth at the western foot of the Shizi (Lion) Mountain, a number of Han-dynasty pottery warriors and horses were found. Although not as big as the life-sized Qin-dynasty pottery warriors and horses found in Xi'an, there were over 1,000 of them arranged in an imposing array. Their discovery sparked a debate in Xuzhou. Many people believed that it was the storage of an ancient pottery kiln, but the more experienced archaeologists were convinced that those were burial objects and that there was likely a large Han imperial tomb in the Lion Mountain. This started Wang Kai's long and arduous search for the pottery figures' owner.

He began by visiting people aged 70 or older in the Shizishan Village and got quite a few leads, but nothing useful. At the time special instruments began to be used to locate tomb sites in China. Wang and his colleagues sought help from relevant universities



and the local mineral department. Eventually the Geological Prospecting Team of the Ministry of Coal Industry took on the task.

Three Prospecting Failures

In February 1986, an American-made, micro-gal gravity detector was used in the search. On the 28th day of intense work, the instrument showed an unusual structure and the team became very excited. They continued drilling and also, in conventional style, dug six ditches on the western side of Lion Mountain. But, there was no sign of the tomb. It was the first failure.

In December 1987, Professor Ning Shunian from the Graduate School of the Mineralogy University came to Xuzhou from Beijing and took an interest in the search. He suggested that Wang Kai invite China's experienced physical prospectors to try again with more advanced instruments. It never occurred to Wang Kai to apply such an ambitious plan because he knew it would cost a great deal of money. But, to his great surprise, those experts invited did not request payment for either their work or use of their instruments. All Wang had to do was to provide food and lodging.

On January 5, 1988, 36 prospectors from Beijing, Anhui, Chongqing, Shaanxi, Jilin and Jiangsu gathered on Lion Mountain. They brought with them nine types of gravity, magnetic, electronic and radioactive prospecting instruments and started work using various methods in the



Previous page, main picture: At the digging site of the Chu King's Tomb in Xuzhou, 1995 (by Zheng Yunfeng)
Small picture: Pottery figurines excavated from the Chu King's Tomb (by Zheng Yunfeng)

1. Hallway of the Han Tomb on Lion Mountain in Xuzhou (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. Archaeologists working in the hallway of the Chu King's Tomb (by Zheng Yunfeng)
3. The hallway leading to the burial chamber in the Chu King's Tomb (by Zheng Yunfeng)
4. The terracotta army discovered in the Lion Mountain (by Shi Baoxiu)
5. The Weavers Stone, a Han-dynasty stone carving
6. The gold sheep head, a decoration unearthed in the Chu King's Tomb (by Zheng Yunfeng)

Carved Stones—Uncovered Treasures

Article by Baoxiu Shi

When the earth was first dug up, it was found that there was a large stone in the north of the tomb. It was the stone of the Han Dynasty (Museum of Han Dynasty Carved Stones). It was carved by the Fanchang (Fanchang) and Fanchang (Fanchang) in the Han Dynasty.

At the same time, a large stone was found in the south of the tomb. It was the stone of the Han Dynasty (Museum of Han Dynasty Carved Stones). It was carved by the Fanchang (Fanchang) and Fanchang (Fanchang) in the Han Dynasty.

Over the years, the stone of the Han Dynasty (Museum of Han Dynasty Carved Stones) has been found in many places. It was the stone of the Han Dynasty (Museum of Han Dynasty Carved Stones). It was carved by the Fanchang (Fanchang) and Fanchang (Fanchang) in the Han Dynasty.

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cold winter on Lion Mountain. The location of the tomb chamber and the run of the passages were eventually laid out. Everyone believed they had succeeded this time, but after an excavation of only 0.6 metre they hit the rock bed and failed a second time.

Two years later, specialists from the Earthquake Bureau of Jiangsu Province were invited to try again because they had successfully located a king's tomb of the Southern Dynasties in Danyang using a seismograph. After 13 days, when they thought they had pinpointed the tomb chamber, the test drilling revealed only a karst cave 15 metres below the surface.

Learning More from the Villagers

Wang Kai was puzzled by the three fruitless attempts, in which dozens of instruments were used, 60 specialists offered help and 200,000 yuan were spent. Wang Kai started to doubt his

assumption.

"In those days, food had no taste to me and I couldn't sleep soundly," Wang Kai said. "I was obsessed with the search for the tomb in the daytime and in my dreams." Since he could not again request money from the Bureau of Culture, he decided to look for traces of the tomb himself. As the vice-curator of the museum located at the foot of Lion Mountain he could spend plenty of time in the area. Wang toured every one of the ridges and gullies in the mountain and roamed the villages, visiting the villagers house by house. "Sometimes I wondered if I had become neurotic or was bewitched by the spirits of the underworld," he recounted.

The Sweet Potato Cellar

One day while Wang Kai was chatting with some villagers, someone said, "I've seen someone digging a sweet potato cellar



on the mountain." To Wang, these simple words were like a magic lantern lighting a foggy path. He knew that a cellar in the mountain had to be hewn into the rock, and an ordinary family would not go to that much trouble for a cellar. Could it be that the diggers had got into a passage in the tomb? Barely controlling his excitement, he asked a villager named Ye Jihong to take him to the cellar's owner. Since it had been a long time, Ye could not remember clearly which family it was. Like a man groping his way in the dark, he and Wang inquired from house to house and eventually found Zhang Liye, an 82-year-old man who had just brought his flock of sheep down from the mountain.

The old man told them that his family had indeed dug several cellars during his grandfather's days. As Wang Kai's voice quivered with excitement, Zhang became frightened and thought he had got himself into trouble. At Wang's request, Zhang took them to the cellars dug in his abandoned old house. The Zhang family's dilapidated three-room home is on the southern slope of the Lion Mountain's main peak. The sweet potato cellar was located between this house and a neighbour's.

Test drilling soon started, but due to the many rocks, it was very difficult. In each one of the dozen holes the drill bit hit rock. After nearly two hours, one drill went down about 1.2 metres, reaching a layer of dark brown soil. Four more workers were brought over to continue the drilling at this promising site. At noon the following day, the drill again hit stone. When the topsoil was removed, the stone showed marks of chiselling, which were most likely left by the tomb builders. A ditch was dug along this stone. The underground passage leading to the tomb was found half a metre below.

"We've found the tomb," Wang Kai rushed back to the museum and shouted at the top of his voice at 3:30 p.m. on July 14, 1991. The whole museum was in an uproar. Later, when asked if that was the most exciting time in his life, Wang answered "Yes" without hesitation.

G



1. The longest stone carving displayed in the Xuzhou Museum of Han-Dynasty Carved Stones (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. The painted coffin inlaid with jade buried in the Han Tomb on Lion Mountain (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. The statue of the occupant of the Han Tomb on Lion Mountain by a modern artist (by Shi Baoxiu)
4. Wang Kai, the archaeologist who played a great role in the digging of the Han Tomb on Lion Mountain (by Shi Baoxiu)
5. The Six Arts, a Han-dynasty stone carving
6. The gate to the Han Tomb on Lion Mountain, Xuzhou (by Shi Baoxiu)

Collector of Carved Stones

Article by Deng

There is a young man named Shi Baoxiu in Xuzhou City, Anhui Province, who has been collecting Han-dynasty carved stones for many years. He has collected more than 100 pieces of carved stones, including a large stone carving of a horse and rider, a stone carving of a gate, and a stone carving of a gate.

Shi Baoxiu is a collector of Han-dynasty carved stones. He has collected more than 100 pieces of carved stones, including a large stone carving of a horse and rider, a stone carving of a gate, and a stone carving of a gate.

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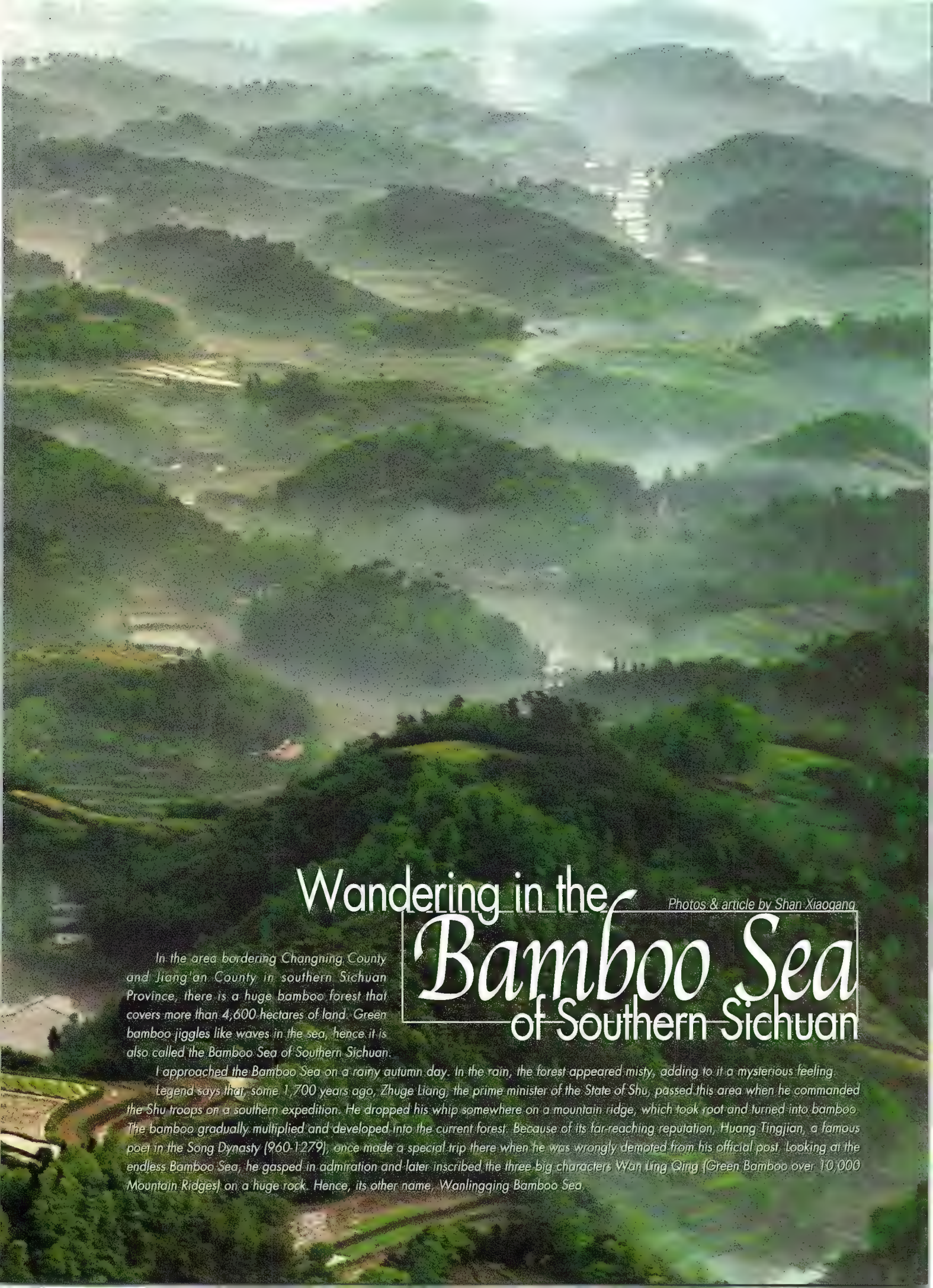
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EXCURSIONS





Wandering in the Bamboo Sea of Southern Sichuan

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

In the area bordering Changning County and Jiang'an County in southern Sichuan Province, there is a huge bamboo forest that covers more than 4,600 hectares of land. Green bamboo jiggles like waves in the sea, hence it is also called the Bamboo Sea of Southern Sichuan.

I approached the Bamboo Sea on a rainy autumn day. In the rain, the forest appeared misty, adding to it a mysterious feeling.

Legend says that, some 1,700 years ago, Zhuge Liang, the prime minister of the State of Shu, passed this area when he commanded the Shu troops on a southern expedition. He dropped his whip somewhere on a mountain ridge, which took root and turned into bamboo. The bamboo gradually multiplied and developed into the current forest. Because of its far-reaching reputation, Huang Tingjian, a famous poet in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), once made a special trip there when he was wrongly demoted from his official post. Looking at the endless Bamboo Sea, he gasped in admiration and later inscribed the three big characters Wan Ling Qing (Green Bamboo over 10,000 Mountain Ridges) on a huge rock. Hence, its other name, Wanlingqing Bamboo Sea.



A Favourite Place for Bamboo

Over several days, I roamed about the bamboo forest with Mr. Liu, my local friend. We toured in great enjoyment, yet, it was the knowledge of bamboo I learned that impressed me most.

Bamboo abounds here due to its unique geographical conditions. Besides being at 600-1,000 metres above sea level, the temperature never drops below zero in winter nor goes above 30°C in summer. Moreover, the sufficient precipitation and fertile acidic soil, rich in nitrogen and iron, aid the bamboo's growth.

Bamboo is indispensable in the daily life of people here. They use bamboo hats to shelter from rain and scorching sun, and they live in bamboo huts that are dry, cool and comfortable inside. Local people use bamboo furniture, baskets, bowls and brooms, and smoke with bamboo pipes. Proof of the bamboo's ubiquity in Chinese lives since ancient times lies in the over 200 Chinese characters with a bamboo radical, many idiomatic phrases related to bamboo, and thousands of poems and essays singing praise of bamboo. In traditional Chinese painting, bamboo is depicted with the lofty image, standing up to power and evil.





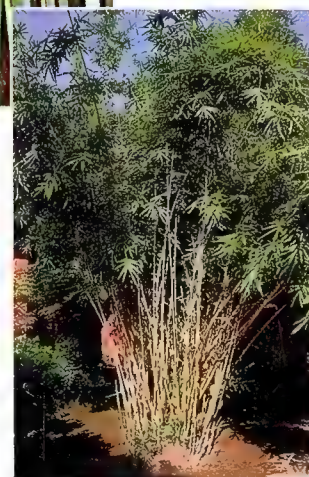
The Informative Bamboo Museum

In this Bamboo Sea there is a unique museum specially devoted to bamboo, where you can learn all about the bamboo culture. The museum is a bamboo sample garden with a house in typical southern Sichuan style. In its six halls are exhibited the history of bamboo planting, China's bamboo resources, the relationship of bamboo with industry, agriculture and transport, traditional Chinese bamboo handicrafts as well as the role of bamboo weapons in ancient warfare. Moreover, visitors can see over 300 kinds of bamboo planted there, including many rare species.

There are 14 million hectares of bamboo groves throughout the world, mostly distributed in Asia. China is one of the world's major bamboo producers, with about 3.4 million hectares of bamboo groves, and an annual output of 6 million tons of bamboo raw materials.

In botany, bamboo forms a unique phylum. It is neither herbaceous nor woody. The world's bamboo is categorised into 1,200 species under 47 genera, while those found in China fall into 180 species under 22 genera. The Chinese bamboo is mainly produced in the Yangtse and Pearl River valleys, and southern Sichuan is one of the major producers. The genera found in the Southern Sichuan Bamboo Sea account for about half of the country's total. Apart from Mao bamboo (*Phyllostachys pubescens*), which constitutes the bulk, there are Flowery, Chicken-Claw, Mian, Jian, Pagoda-like, Human-Face, Ku, Palm, Gold-Thread, Ci, Water, Stained, Black and Indented bamboo. Flowery bamboo is a mutation of Mao bamboo and is extremely rare, while the Human-Face bamboo, also a variation of Mao bamboo, is extremely hard to cultivate. The Indented bamboo is an artificially altered variety of *Phyllostachys pubescens*.

Traditionally, roots of the mother bamboo are moved to a field, where their shoots sprout in March and April; they grow into new bamboo in May and June and mature from July to October. From November to March they rest for the winter. Generally, a bamboo plant lives about 20 years and the best time to cut it is between six and nine years.



Previous page:

The enchanting scene of the Bamboo Sea in southern Sichuan (by Liu Tianfu)

1. Arrow bamboo with tender leaves
2. Buddha-Belly bamboo is so named because of its appearance. (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. Human-Face bamboo, a variation of Mao bamboo, is hard to cultivate.
4. The Southern Sichuan Bamboo Sea covers 4,600 hectares.
5. The Bamboo Sea Museum (by He Mingsheng)
6. Mao bamboo is the most populous species in the Bamboo Sea. (by Shi Baoxiu)
7. Slender Jinsi (Gold-Thread) bamboo

Innumerable Uses of Bamboo

Bamboo serves a great many useful purposes. Different types of bamboo are used for different purposes. In the few days I stayed in the Bamboo Sea, what I saw and heard was all about bamboo.

Mao bamboo is a very good material for building and weaving. Its shoots, fungal growths and juice are edible; its branches and leaves are made into paper or used as packaging and filling materials; and the roots and reeds become decorative handicraft articles. Nan bamboo is the best material for chairs and beds as well as for building house, huts and rafts. The slips cut from the outer layer of this bamboo are often used to weave mats.

The extremely tall and straight Gui bamboo is usually used to sun clothes. Yet, one other important use is as punt-poles for boatmen or the hooking poles to pull timber rafts from the current. The leaves of Water bamboo are thick and wide, making them ideal wrappers for making *zongzi*, or glutinous rice dumplings, a traditional food for the Dragon Boat Festival.



A World of Bamboo Art

Ordinary bamboo can be turned into exquisite articles of art by carving or weaving. The smallest ones are bookmarks and name cards, and the largest are dressing tables, beds and cabinets. Even the roots and their beard-like fibres that were previously considered useless are now processed into much sought-after tourist items.

Bamboo weaving is a traditional handicraft in China that can be traced back to the early stages of Chinese civilisation. It gradually matured into a handicraft in the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.). By the early Song Dynasty, handicraft bamboo weaving became very popular. In Zhejiang, Fujian, Sichuan and Guangdong provinces, bamboo strips were used to produce numerous multi-purpose lanterns and flowery baskets in various shapes.

The famous Jiang'an Bamboo Handicraft Factory, which turns out all sorts of bamboo handicrafts, is near the Bamboo Sea. The workshop makes pencil holders of intentionally Indented bamboo. The young shoots are clipped tight in certain places with bamboo slips so they could only grow in the desired shapes. Along with a little carving, they become nice handicraft articles. The factory also produces carved vases from Human-Face bamboo, which was lovingly handled by everyone. The joints between each section of this rare bamboo, *Phyllostachys aurea*, stand out and look like a human face.

The beautiful bamboo landscape has also been an inspiration in the development of the bamboo culture. Mme Li of the Five Dynasties (907-979) reportedly created ink paintings on bamboo. By the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), ink-painted bamboo had been commonly used to symbolise the noble and unyielding integrity of learned scholars.

Besides poems and paintings about bamboo, there is another form of art related to the plant — bonsai. Comprising miniature bamboo, trees and a rockery, the bonsai is meticulously prepared to reproduce the beauty and elegance of bamboo in limited space.





Visiting a Family in the Bamboo Forest

After the rain had stopped, Mr. Liu guided me around the famous 13 bridges over the Huaxi Stream. Despite the sunshine, the bamboo forest was fairly dim due to the density of the grooves. Mr. Liu told me that whatever you throw in the forest will not fly farther than 30 metres. To demonstrate, he threw a pebble with great energy, but it fell on the ground not far away after hitting three bamboo plants.

We walked into the dell along a flagstone footpath by a clear stream. Over this one-kilometre-long stream there are 13 stone bridges, of which eight are from the Ming and Qing dynasties. The last one was a natural bridge and its stone surface was fully immersed in thick lichen and orchids. An old house standing over the knoll was built by immigrants from Guangdong in the middle 17th century. They must have worked very hard to create the fields and build the house, thus enabling themselves to settle down in such a picturesque environment. As we entered the courtyard, the host immediately invited us to have some fragrant green tea prepared with spring water, and local nuts and fruits.

Government Departments and Officials for Bamboo

In ancient China, bamboo occupied an important place in various aspects of life. In war, it was made into various sorts of weapons. In peacetime, it was employed as an important material for buildings, transport facilities and flood-protection. Since the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D.220), all governments had built official bamboo gardens (forests) to ensure its supply. A special department was established to supervise bamboo growing and cutting. The bamboo administrative department remained until the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

The official bamboo gardens varied greatly in size, some large ones stretching dozens of kilometres long. Strict management was enforced and soldiers were often sent to guard them. Usually, local people were hired to look after and cut the bamboo.



1. Building a fence with bamboo
2. A bamboo basket specially made for washing potatoes (by Liu Tianfu)
3. Bamboo shoots grow fast after a spring rain. (by Liu Tianfu)
4. Farmers making bamboo products in slack farming seasons
5. Bamboo is used as the pipe for spring water.
6. A bamboo bridge built in the fields brings convenience to the farmers, but does not occupy farm land.



Decapitation Following Fungus Failure

Over the mountain slope behind the house is some land where bamboo fungus is grown. Only in 1984 did the local scientists succeed in breeding it by artificial means. Now this fungus, prettily wrapped in a net-like white substance, has turned into a delicacy that ordinary folks enjoy. Its particular fragrance and health-giving functions meant that in ancient times it was used as a court tribute. With fungus and pigeon eggs the imperial kitchen cooked the famous dish called Moon in Gauze, which was aromatic and attractive.

In the old days only small quantities of fungus could be collected, and the Southern Sichuan Bamboo Sea was one of the few places in China where it grew. According to the local annals, bamboo fungus was one of the three delicacies served as imperial tributes from this area. Every year at least 500 kg of the dry fungus had to be contributed to the imperial court in Beijing. As Empress Dowager Cixi took a particular liking to it, the official in charge of the imperial kitchen took great pains to transplant several hundred plants of bamboo from southern Sichuan to the imperial garden, in hopes of supplying the empress dowager with fresh fungus all year round. Despite great care, the bamboo never produced any fungus, and moreover, they all died the next autumn. Empress Dowager Cixi was so angry that she ordered the official to be decapitated.





Cellar Keeps Bamboo Shoots Fresh

At the house by the stream we had a meal that included snow-white bean jelly, golden pumpkin and bamboo-smoked ham. Of course, bamboo shoots went into most of the dishes: tender, stir-fried sliced shoots that resembled white jade; fresh bamboo shoots stewed in soy sauce; cold fresh bamboo slices in red pepper oil; and a big bowl of bamboo shoots in mushroom soup. I learned that the winter shoots of the maternal plants were the tastiest. One secret to avoid losing the fragrance is to refrain from putting them in water after the initial wash. They can be cooked alone or with meat. The cold dish of bamboo shoots is prepared by burning them over a fire.

The host took us to visit his winter cellar. In the Bamboo Sea, every farmer household has such a cellar — a cubic-metre-sized hole dug in the ground. The trapdoor was covered with a thin layer of earth. Inside the hole, the bamboo shoots were neatly arranged with their pointed tops up. They looked as if they were freshly dug up, but the host said they could keep fresh for a year in the cellar. People there could have fresh shoots year round.

To dig bamboo shoots in winter, you must distinguish maternal from paternal bamboo. Generally speaking, the plant that branches in two at its first joint is a maternal one and would perhaps produce shoots. Then, you must determine where the shoots would be. Normally, they occur in the direction that the maternal bamboo tilts — where the dew from the bamboo tips drop.

By nightfall, we returned to the Bamboo Sea Villa for dinner. I again found myself in a world of bamboo — bamboo walls, roof, chairs, tables, paintings and lanterns. Even all the tableware was made of bamboo. To eat bamboo dishes and drink wine made of bamboo juice would surely make the immortals green with envy. No wonder that all the bamboo forest dwellers enjoy long lives.

Translated by Z. G. Li



Bamboo Leaf Poem

Legend says that, in the Three Kingdoms period (220-280), the famous general Guan Yu of the State of Shu was captured by Cao Cao, the ruler of the State of Wei, and pressed to stay. But Guan Yu's heart was loyal to Liu Bei, the Shu ruler. To show his loyalty to Liu, he composed a poem, using bamboo leaves to form the strokes of all the characters. The poem reads: "Not grateful to my host in the east, All that concerns me is my reputation in history books. A bamboo leaf may look plain, Yet it will never wither."

Stiles carved with this poem can be found in various temples devoted to Guan Yu in Henan, Hebei, and Chongqing. They all represent a unique combination of poetry, calligraphy and painting, with great artistic appeal.

1. Bamboo fungus was used as a tribute to the imperial court. (by Liu Tianfu)
2. Young bamboo shoots can make delicious dishes.
3. An elegant bed made of bamboo (by He Mingsheng)
4. Bamboo carved figures displayed on a mountain trail
5. Sliced tender bamboo shoot is a best seller.
6. Bamboo can be made into various crafts.
7. A hat stall at the entrance to the Bamboo Sea

Tips for the Traveller



Tourist Map of the Southern Sichuan Bamboo Sea

Transport

Buses go from Chongqing (via Luzhou-Jiang'an) and Chengdu (via Longchang-Luzhou) to the Bamboo Sea. Domestic flights go to Yibin, from where buses run to the Bamboo Sea via Changning and Jiang'an. From Changning and Jiang'an, special buses run regularly to the Bamboo Sea. Within the boundaries of the Bamboo Sea, there are motor tricycles and cars for hire.

Accommodation

The Bamboo Sea Villa in Wanli Town, Jiang'an County, offers the best facilities. Located in the middle of the bamboo forest, the villa boasts rooms and canteens built and decorated with bamboo. Standard rooms: 40 to 180 yuan.

Tourist Attractions

In this vast sea of bamboo, there are the Baizhu (Hundred Bamboo) Forest, Bamboo Sea Museum, Qinglong Lake, Ancient Plank Way and Hongya (Red Cliff) Carvings at Tianbao Village, Xianyu Cave, Seven-Colour Waterfalls at Luohun Terrace, and the Thirteen Bridges over the Huaxi Stream. Though summer is the best time, the early spring snowy landscape is also extremely beautiful. The Bamboo Handicraft Factory in Jiang'an is also worth visiting.

Shopping

Bamboo root carvings, various bamboo weavings and handicraft articles, dried and preserved bamboo shoots, bamboo fungus, tea grown in the Bamboo Sea.

Local Delicacies

At the Bamboo Sea Villa, an all-bamboo banquet and game dishes are served in addition to southern Sichuan snacks and food cooked with medicinal herbs from the bamboo forest. In households on the Huaxi Stream, try some typical rural dishes and bamboo shoot wine.



1. A bamboo weaving picture
2. Vivid bamboo root carvings

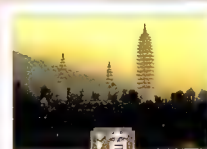
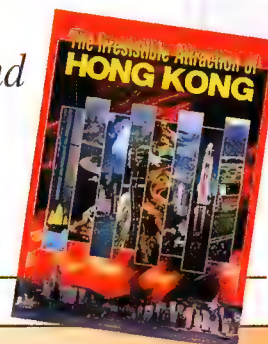
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JINGDEZHEN: TOWN OF CERAMICS

Photos & article by Xiao Gang

Entering Jingdezhen, the well-known capital of porcelain in Jiangxi Province, for the first time, I thought it looked like any ordinary town in southern China, with winding, long lanes and with rows of houses on both sides. As I walked on, however, its hidden charm was gradually revealed. In each shop, porcelain items were piled up on the shelves and the ground. Shop assistants were painting the clay pieces and white porcelain vases were being put neatly beside the heated kilns, while the bright-coloured porcelain

objects cooling in the kiln dazzled with beauty. The 18 processes in making porcelain, from clay-kneading, molding, wheel-throwing, painting, design-pasting, carving to glazing, were all done in the workshop, which obviously used to be the sitting room of the house. Many porcelain objects were randomly piled on street corners, walls or roofs. Almost everyone walking by was carrying porcelain clay bodies, by hand, on bicycle racks, on shoulder or in baskets. Once in a while, shouts would ring out, because the space was limited in a small lane.

In recent years, many state-owned and collective porcelain factories in Jingdezhen closed down and a large number of workers and artisans lost their jobs or retired at an earlier age. To help them make a living, the government opened Fanjiaying, originally a residential area, for people to start their own porcelain workshops. Thanks to the preferential policies, these private shops became very successful in making imitations of ancient porcelain. So the area is also known as Fanggu (Ancient Imitation) Village.

The Kiln: The Key to Making Porcelain

Some of the workshops are specialised kilns, where porters are often found coming and going, busy delivering clay pieces. I walked into the kiln workshop of Mr. Guan at 29 Fanjiaying. They had just finished loading the kiln and were about to hold a worshipping ceremony before starting the fire. The workers worship the God of Wind and Fire, also known as the Kiln God of Profit. Usually, they hold a small ceremony for each kiln, and as winter begins, they hold a big ceremony for each kiln to "warm up the Kiln God".

"The essence of porcelain-making lies in kiln," Mr. Guan said. The firing is directly related to quality. Though now the kilns are modern, care is still needed. Mr. Guan's kiln is a universal shuttle-style kiln. All the clay pieces go on a two-track, four-wheel flat cart moving in and out like a shuttle. This type, if imported from Italy, would cost a few hundred thousand yuan. Mr. Guan's is a local product, which cost him 90,000 yuan. The most expensive part is the inner layer of asbestos firebricks. His kiln uses liquefied petroleum gas fuel, while others may use natural gas or propane. This type is much easier to operate than the old firewood kiln, and is better for the environment.

Temperature control is very important. Pottery is fired at 1,250°C or lower. The coloured porcelain with surface glazes, such as the Blue-and-White pieces, is fired at temperatures from 1,300-1,350°C. If the temperature is too high, the porcelain ages and the colour fades. Usually the firing needs 24 hours: 12 hours for the temperature to

increase and another 12 hours to decrease. The firing of each kiln costs 900 yuan, which is paid by the customers, according to the space each occupied. For the coloured porcelain with glaze underneath, an electric oven is now used.

The Guo Family's French Order

Frequent overseas visitors have provided many business opportunities for Fanjiaying. The local people have become used to seeing curious visitors who wander around and ask all sorts of questions. Workers and owners greet them all hospitably.

I stopped at the workshop at 83 Fanjiaying when it was almost dark. The house was brightly lit and people's shadows could be seen through the windows. Inside, men and women were busy, some were kneading the clay, while others were forming the clay items, working the wheel, drawing patterns or glazing. In these types of family workshops even children learn how to cut paper patterns after school.

The boss, Guo Jiufu, 36, had been an assistant engineer in the town's Hongguang Porcelain Factory, but was laid off at the same time as his wife Qi Chunlan three years ago. They opened this workshop with the help of his retired parents, and brothers and sisters.

Mr. Guo said they were busy producing porcelain for a 40,000-yuan French order of 3,000 pieces. Since an advance had been paid, any delay required compensation and they would not get any future orders. In the other room, there were close to 300 pieces of Blue-and-White porcelain of various sizes waiting to be fired. They were made according to the design in a photo from the French customers. The top was larger than the bottom, and had curled edges and a cover, supposedly following the design of a Ming Dynasty porcelain made in Jingdezhen.

Eggshell Porcelain

The eggshell porcelain is a unique Jingdezhen porcelain with characteristics like "white as jade, bright as a mirror, thin as paper and ringing like a chime". The technique involved to make the milky white, nearly transparent porcelain is the most



1. Stylish vases created by ceramics artisans in Jingdezhen
2. Jinghong Porcelain Factory can produce Blue-and-White plates several metres wide.
3. Filling the kiln

difficult. One piece I saw in Jingdezhen was as small as a sparrow's egg. I held my breath looking at it closely, in fear it would roll off the table. When I held a larger bowl, 60 mm in diameter, I felt like I was holding a white cloud. Thin as a cicada's wing and light as silk, the bowl has painted colour patterns on both sides; holding it up to the light, the pictures overlap to create a wondrous "picture within picture". There are also larger eggshell bowls and plates, with diameters of 10 cm to one metre.

I also visited some private crafts shops. Mr. Hu, the boss of one workshop, said he inherited the technique from his ancestors. Artisans in his father's and grandfather's time relied on their ears and fingers to feel the thickness. Since the technique was extremely difficult back then, the eggshell pieces were not for ordinary people. Now a new technique is used to increase production and lower the cost. However, it is still not easy to grind the clay to a thickness of two or three mm. After being ground and trimmed over 100 times, the clay form is put into a box that is now seldom seen, and sent to be fired.

At No. 48 of Fanjiaying, Mr. Qin, nearly 50, talked about the characteristics of Jingdezhen's coloured porcelain while continuing his drawings. He said that the underglaze prevents the colours from fading and the paint poisons from seeping in. The representative of the underglazed colour products is the Blue-and-White porcelain. These

pieces used to sell at higher prices due to the skill needed, but now modern methods have caused the price to drop dramatically. A piece sold for 3,000 yuan previously now sells for 300. Mr. Qin was working on an imitation ancient porcelain, Blue-and-White plus a red glaze. The red glaze was actually grey before firing. His wife was painting the spaces



between the colour patterns with a black ink that would become silver after being baked in the electric oven. To make it look antique, a kind of acid similar to gentian violet is applied to cause erosion.

Porcelain Street at Lianshe South Road

Around the northern entrance of Fanjiaying is the well-known Lianshe Road South, also called Porcelain Street. A few hundred porcelain shops line the street from south to north. In front of the shops vendors' stalls sell various kinds of daily-use porcelain. Everyday, customers come like waves, and carts of porcelain are shipped in and out like the rising and setting of the sun, day in and day out.

Porcelain Traders Provide Good Service

The ancient Porcelain Street is located at Lower Mashi Lane close to Changjiang Ferry for transport convenience. In addition to the shops handling wholesale and retail business, there are also traders providing all kinds of services, including food, accommodation, buying, selecting and shipping porcelain, consulting and even negotiating. This happens because of an unwritten regulation here: if a porcelain workshop is not a trader itself, it could not sell large quantities of its porcelain. Tradition meant that once the trader and workshop had a deal, their business relationship would not change unless one of them closed down. This tradition is still followed today.

Hay Market for the Packing

To prevent breakage in shipment, porcelain needs perfect packing. In the old days, there were hay markets on the Porcelain Street providing



packing services — box packing for fine porcelain and hay packing for coarser ones. Large ones were packed in single unit, and small ones were packed together. The carrying pole in the hand of the headman was also inherited from his ancestors and symbolised his special relation with a certain porcelain trader. If there were too many goods for the headman to carry, the trader asked him to hire more people instead of doing it himself. This also involved a responsibility. If the goods were mistakenly packed or broken, the headman had to compensate.

Now there is no hay market, but services are still there. Before I left Jingdezhen, I bought several Blue-and-White porcelain jars. At my request the shop assistant called in a man-and-wife team. With old newspapers and rice hay, they packed my jars as tightly as a scarecrow. After a long distance trip by bus, train and plane, the jars arrived safe and sound.

Visiting Historical Kilns

Jingdezhen is dotted with numerous ancient kilns, but the most representative one is Hutian Kiln in the town's southeastern outskirts. With hills behind and water in front, the ancient kiln is now the site of the Porcelain and Pottery Research Centre.

The kiln was first built in the Five Dynasties (907-960), and production continued through to the mid-Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). As the largest porcelain production centre in history, it was where the world's first Blue-and-White porcelain was made. At the original site, an ancient kiln has been restored, with tall wood-structured workshops. The beams in the houses are of the erosion-resistant and fireproof *chu* wood. The large space above the beams is for storing firewood for several firing kilns.

Firewood came from the South Hill, and the South River provided convenient boat transportation. Quality clay was from the nearby Sanbao Village. All this ensured that the ancient kiln could keep a large-scale production for hundreds of years. Some of the large water-powered tilt hammers are still able to crush clay stones. According to Qi Xianzhong, a

farmer who was feeding the material in, Sanbao Village has been a porcelain processing centre since the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Because of the water-powered hammers they used, the village was called Sanbao Water Hammer. Sixty to seventy water hammers like this are now scattered along the streams, which attract many foreigners who admire them as examples of environmental protection.



The Exhibition of Ceramics History

The east section of the ancient kiln exhibition area is dedicated to the restored Ming and Qing Imperial Kilns. Clay rooms and firewood houses show the complete process of porcelain making in ancient times. Workers in charge of clay shaping and colour drawing still use the tools and techniques of the Ming and Qing dynasties to produce traditional porcelain popular then. A few grey-haired masters were using bamboo and wooden sticks to rotate the wheel, and shaped the clay by hand. Painters were using writing brushes to draw patterns on Blue-and-White porcelain bowls or jars imitating those designated for the imperial court.

The western section, composed of the Qing Garden and Ming Hall, is the Museum of Ceramics History, where the elegant Ming Imperial porcelain unearthed recently in Jingdezhen are displayed. What fascinated me most were the Blue-and-White porcelain pictures, which are framed and hung in the corridor.

Translated by M.Q.

1. A family workshop
2. Making imitations the original way
3. Tourists enjoy buying porcelains at roadside stalls.

Tips for the Traveller

Accommodation

Jingdezhen Hotel***; Zhushan Road; 280 yuan for a standard room.
This hotel is close to Lianshe Road North, and a short walk to Fanjiqiang.

Transport

Motorbike taxis are good for short distances and passing through small streets and lanes. The starting fare is 2 yuan. Taxis are better for longer distances. The starting fare is 5 yuan, and one yuan per km after three km.

Shopping

For daily-use porcelain and simple art porcelain, go to the Porcelain Street. The goods are usually low-priced. For medium and high-quality art porcelain, go to special shops such as the Ceramics Museum, Ancient Kiln Exhibition Area, International Ceramics Centre, Ceramics Research Centre, shops run by large porcelain factories or research institutes, and

hotels. Prices vary greatly.

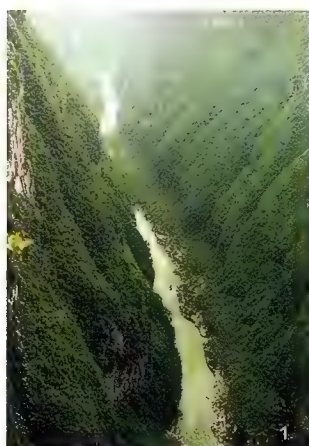
The selection of the type of porcelain — eggshell, plain, white or high-white glazed — should be based on its use. Eggshell porcelain is not for daily use, plain ones are not for tableware or tea sets, and high-white glazed pieces are not for large table sets. Listen to the sound to judge the quality. If you tap the porcelain wall and it chimes sharply, it is a good one; otherwise it may be cracked. The overglazed colour porcelain is only suitable to look at. Tableware and tea sets must be underglazed which is nonpoisonous and durable.

For more information on the art of ceramics, go to the International Ceramics Centre in the Sculpture Porcelain Factory; to have a try on the wheel, go to the Ancient Porcelain Exhibition Area or visit well-known workshops.



Visiting the Gejia People on the Chong'an River

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin



1. The picturesque Chong'an Valley provides an ideal site for rafting. (by Pan Hongbo)
2. Young girls wearing helmet-like red tasseled hats
3. Fengxiang Village is the home of good dancers and singers.



After seeing the Miaos' Sisters' Rice Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province, I hurriedly headed to Huangping County to visit the Gejia people on the Chong'an River. While the Miaos are widely known for their costumes and luxurious and sparkling silver ornaments, the little-known Gejia attract attention with their unique attire and mysterious customs.







The Red-Tasseled Hat

The trip from Taijiang to Chong'an in Huangping County via Kaili was filled with pleasant views of the spring fields. My excitement grew at the sight of the flowing green waters of the Chong'an River and the famous iron-chain bridge spanning it.

Unexpectedly, I found that my hotel, the Chong'an River Holiday Village, sat right on the riverbank. Out of the window, I could see shuttling long boats carrying the Gejia people. In this environment filled with the flavour of natural wilderness, I felt as if I were not a tourist but a part of it. Most of the customers at the hotel were from Japan and Europe, and everyone was attracted to the two service girls — Meihua and Wenzhen, the two Gejia sisters from Wangba Village. Their clothes seemed like ancient warrior's armour but their faces had naive coy smiles. This was my introduction to the Gejia people.

The Gejia girls wear red-tasseled hats while married women wear embroidered scarves with a silver hairpin in the shape of a square awl. Their clothes are made of batik or embroidered cloth, and they also wear exquisite silver ornaments. They have short skirts topped with aprons and embroidered red leg wrappings. Initially the costumes evoke images of boldness and bravery but a closer examination shows a delicate nature.

My guide, Mr. Pan, said that the red-tasseled hat had evolved from an ancient battle helmet. Legend says that the Gejias' ancestor was a general well versed in military affairs. In recognition

1. The old-style wooden boat rafting on the Chong'an River
2. This iron-rail bridge spanning the Chong'an River was built in the Qing Dynasty.
3. A mill using the water from Chong'an River as its source of power
4. In the wilderness of Chong'an
5. People of Gejia and Miao ethnic groups travel by boat on the Chong'an River.
6. Travellers get wet when they raft through the Upper Wild Cave.
7. A unique heating device of the Gejia





of his merits on the battleground, the emperor gave him a red-tasseled hat. To carry on his meritorious style and the family tradition, he gave the hat to his daughter, and thus it has been passed down.

There are about 60,000 Gejia people scattered around southeastern Guizhou, with most clustered along the Chong'an River in Huangping County. Written records of their origin are very scarce, but some local annals show their ancestors were the Shanliao people of the Jin Dynasty (265-420). Due to the difficulties in defining their ethnic group, they are commonly known as the Gejia people.

Rafting on the Chong'an River

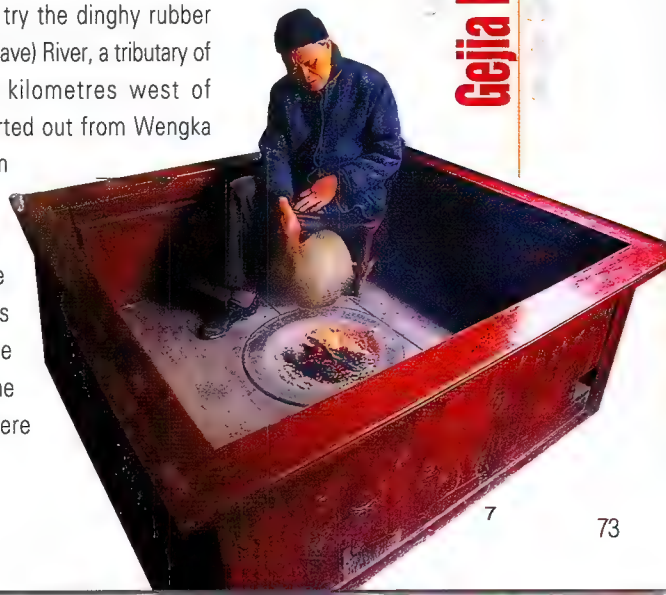
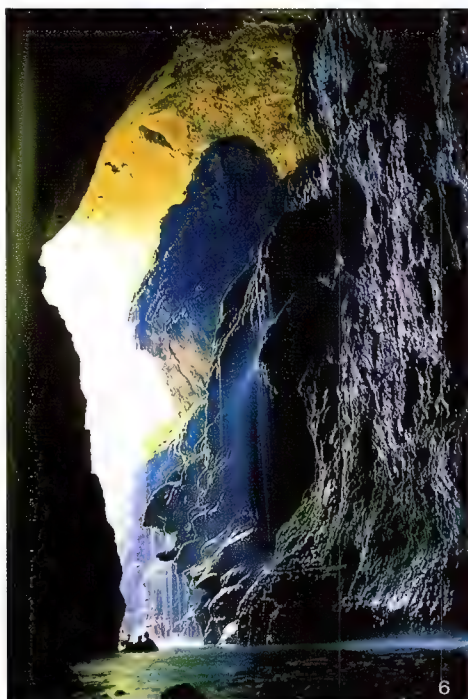
The Chong'an River, a focal point in the lives of the Gejia people, is the upper reaches of the Qingshui River, which originates in the primeval

forest of the Zhuji Mountain. Rafting on a section of the river upstream from the hotel is a favourite tourist programme. Along the five-kilometre stretch sheer cliffs present picturesque views and the clear water churns turbulently.

Early the following morning, we walked upstream along the valley. Boatmen here first moved their old-style wooden boats to the upper reaches with poles and ropes before loading them with tourists and releasing them downstream. The path on the bank zigzagged, but the view was as beautiful as it could be. With Meihua and Wenzhen as our guides and posing occasionally for our photos, none of us felt any fatigue. When we reached the end of the valley, the boatmen cooked some fish they had caught in the river for us.

The rafting downstream after the meal was a great sensation. There are 33 shoals where the water is turbulent. The scull, several metres long, galloped through the waves like a horse, yet we hardly got wet at all. This was quite different from my previous experiences rafting with a rubber dinghy, during which I always got soaked.

People who want more excitement and are not afraid of getting wet may try the dinghy rubber rafting in the Yedong (Wild Cave) River, a tributary of the Chong'an River, 28 kilometres west of Huangping. Our group started out from Wengka Village, with two people in one dinghy. True to its name, Yedong River runs through a wild area. The turbulent water of this narrow river added to the wilderness feeling. Along the 18-km river adventure, there



Gejia People



are two huge caves, the Shangye (Upper Wild) Cave and Xiaye (Lower Wild) Cave. The upper cave, with openings in its ceiling, was about 80 metres high and 100 metres long. A huge rock forms a natural bridge spanning the river. At one point, a waterfall drenched us. The lower cave is also 100 metres long but barely a dozen metres high. Stalactites of all shapes fill the caves. At one section, the river suddenly narrows so much that only one boat can gingerly sail through. Due to our poor sailing skills, all of our dinghies turned over, dropping us into the water. Anyway, our cruise turned out to be a trip of beautiful wild views and thrilling excitement.

Learning About Batik

Chongxing Township in Huangping County is

the heart of all Gejia towns. We visited Wangba Village in Chongxing, which took us only 20 minutes to drive from Chong'an to its entrance at the foot of the mountain. It took us 30 minutes to walk high up the mountain to reach the village.

Wangba Village has 300 households of about 1,000 people. They live in wooden houses and enjoy a self-sufficient life. As they have little contact with the outside world, the villagers retain their plain traditional lifestyle. The arrival of our group consisting of people from the West, Japan and Hong Kong brought great excitement to the village. Almost everyone turned out to greet us and stare at the "strange creatures". According to local tradition, all visitors are treated to wine as a welcoming gesture. Though I rarely drink, out of respect I emptied my bowl and received a red seal on my face as my "passport" into the village.

Entertainment consisted of songs and dances performed by beautifully dressed women. At our request, they showed us how to do Gejia style embroidery and how to make batik. To make the batik, they melted wax over a charcoal fire, then applied it onto the white cloth with a special little knife, making geometric patterns enriched with exaggerated images of birds, animals, flowers and plants. Next, the material was put into a blue dye made from wild plants to let the unwaxed sections absorb the dye. After the wax was washed away in hot water, white patterns on a blue background

1. Dancing girls of Fengxiang Village
2. Once in a Gejia village, everyone becomes a dancer.
3. The demonstration of batik making
4. Guests being treated with entry wine and chicken claws by their hospitable hosts
5. A man from Fengxiang Village wearing typical Gejia headgear





were revealed. Gejia girls start learning the art of batik-making at the age of seven or eight, and 10 years later, they become very experienced. Making batik is an inseparable part of their life. Some of our group wanted to buy their products, but villagers have no wish to sell their articles. However, tourists can buy similar souvenirs in the hotel's shop.

As I was on an organised tour, I had to leave before I could learn more about the local customs. I did notice, however, there were obvious hardships in their lives. Their only school was housed in a poor wooden house, and the only teacher had to teach children of all ages and levels. Still quite a few children did not complete primary school. My heart ached when I learned that Meihua could not write her own name when she started working at the hotel, because her family could not afford to send a girl to school.

Chong'an Revisited

I revisited Chong'an seven months later. This time my mission was associated with helping Wangba Village build a school with money raised in Hong Kong. As well, I was still interested in learning more about the Gejia customs and lifestyle.

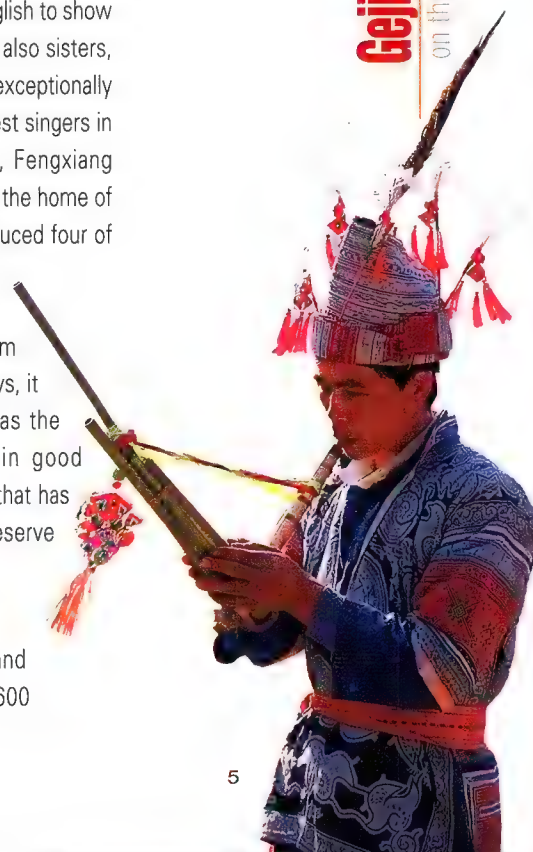
I did not meet Meihua and Wenzhen, but the good news was that they had gone to Kunming to demonstrate batik-making at the World Horticultural Expo and had learned enough basic English to show foreigners around. Guizhi and Guiying, also sisters, had taken their hotel jobs. They have exceptionally sweet voices and are among the 10 best singers in Southeast Guizhou. Their hometown, Fengxiang Village, also in Chongxing Township, is the home of Gejia songs and dances, and has produced four of the top 10 singers.

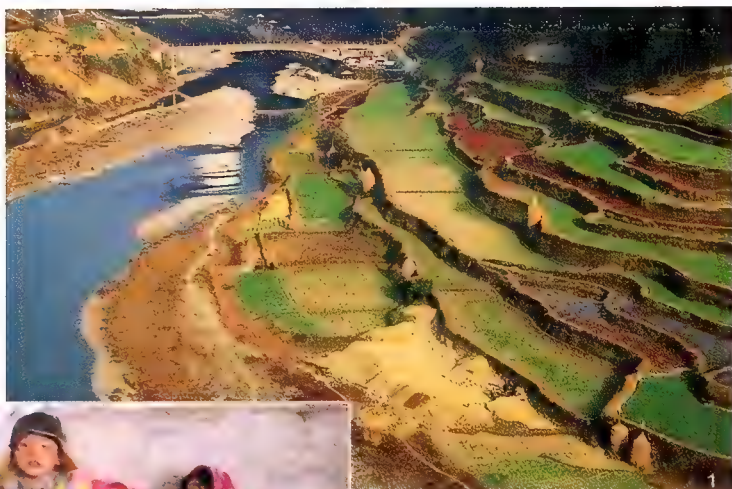
With great interest, I went to Fengxiang Village. The village is 17 km from the county town, but on rainy days, it is even difficult for jeeps to reach, as the seven-km mountain road is not in good condition. It is probably this isolation that has so far enabled the Gejia people to preserve their original lifestyle.

The Harong Festival

The village, divided into upper and lower sections, is very large, with 600

Visiting the
Gejia People
on the Chong'an River





households and a total population of over 2,000. We visited a house sitting between the two sections to see a drum symbolising the ancestors of the Fengxiang folks. This camphor wood drum covered with ox hide is over 1.5 metres long with a diameter of 0.5

metre. Gejia people believe that the souls of their ancestors live right inside the drum. The drum is always kept by the most esteemed elderly villager and is taken out only on the Harong Festival for worshipping. There is no fixed date for the festival — it may come once every eight, 10 or even 50 years. The date is picked by the female tribal chief through divination. The last festival was in 1993.

The Gejia people have two tribal regulatory bodies — one male and one female. Each body has its own chief and the responsibilities of overseeing discipline, agreements or sacrificial ceremonies.

On the festival day, villagers first gather by the ancestral drum to worship. Men dress like women, wearing pheasant feathers on their heads and dance around the drum. People play bamboo pipes, dance, eat and drink heartily in celebrations that last three days and nights. On the last day, the tribal chief and two assistants aim at a female image with arrows while the crowd cheers them on. If they hit the breasts and private parts, the crowd bursts into a loud cheer, for this symbolises prosperity for the whole tribe.


Gejia Hospitality

Singing and dancing teams from both upper and lower Xiangfeng put on superb performances for us. Both Gejia men and women can dance while playing pipes as their own accompaniment. Their dances

imitate animals and people's activities, as showed in *The Monkey Dance*, *Girls Catching Locusts* and *Catching Fish and Shrimps*. Courtship is also carried on at this kind of gathering. When they dance in pairs, a girl chooses her partner deliberately. If the young man is fond of the girl, he would step on the toe of the girl; she, in turn, taps his shoulder with her fist to express her acceptance.

In the afternoon, we were treated to a typical Gejia family feast. Guests must first drink the "entry wine" before being admitted into the dining room. The host usually offers a chicken claw with his chopsticks to show his respect for the guest. At this meal, I was treated as the most distinguished guest and was therefore given the chicken head to eat. After we all sat down, the women kept adding food to our bowls so that no matter how much we ate our bowls always remained full. Differing from the Miaos, who show their hospitality by offering wine, the Gejia people urge their guests to eat more rice. When you are full, you simply put your hand over the bowl.

The Gejia farewell ceremony is serious and pompous. When we left, girls sang as they presented us with "goodbye wine". Luckily for me, this time I got away with just touching my lips to the wine bowl.

The unforgettable hospitality, the age-old traditions and the new school to be built will surely take me back for a third time to this Gejia village. 

Translated by F. Huang



1. The Chong'an Valley is inhabited by the Gejia and Miao people.
2. Young villagers of Fengxiang
3. The ancestor drum that represents the source of the clan
4. At the foundation-laying ceremony of the Wangba Village School which will be built with the donation from Hong Kong (by Pan Hongbo)
5. Embroidery is part of the life for Gejia women



Tips for the Traveller



Transport

Take a train from Guiyang, capital of Guizhou Province, to Kaili, 197 km away. There is bus service between Kaili and Huangping. Buses from Chong'an Town to Chongxing Township (10 km) are available on market days; you can hire a motor tricycle on other days. Wangba Village is on the way. It takes 90 minutes to walk from Chongxing to Fengxiang Village.

Accommodation

Chong'an:

Chong'an Holiday Village: 80 yuan for a double room; Miao-style meal: 25 yuan.

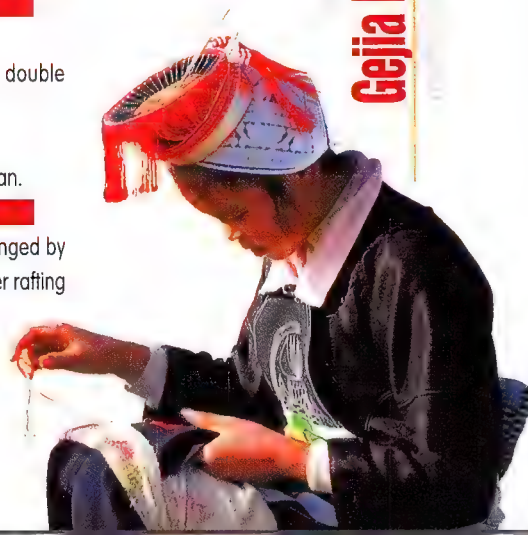
Kaili:

Kaili Hotel: 150 yuan. Nantian Hotel: 138 yuan.

Tours

Rafting on the Chong'an River can be arranged by the hotel, 200 yuan per boat. Wild Cave River rafting is not yet a routine tourist programme.

Geja People



SANZHAOLUN

A MODEL NATIONAL FOREST PARK

Article by Zhang Zhaogui

Today, with the completion of the Beijing-Kowloon Railway, it is convenient to go northward to common scenic spots such as Ganzhou, Jinggang Mountain and Mount Lushan. But in the hinterland of Jiangxi there is a tranquil primitive place, called Sanzhaolun, which is lovely for a spring outing, yet little known. It is in Jing'an County in Jiangxi, about 60 kilometres from Nanchang. Sanzhaolun is an area of tall mountains overgrown with dense forests. The waters there — the rivers, streams, lakes and ponds — are as clear as crystal. Together with Zhangjiajie in Hunan and Qiandaoahu in Zhejiang, Sanzhaolun was designated a national model forest park as early as 1994. But due



to inconvenient transportation, it has remained unknown to the public.

High Mountains, Dense Forests and Calm Rivers

Drifting on bamboo rafts along the Beihe (North) River is one of the distinct programmes of the Sanzhaolun National Forest Park. The North River, located in Baofeng Township, runs from Taipingzhou at Mazu Daochang down to the scenic Dazi River Bridge over a total of about 15 kilometres. The river course is full of twists and turns, with sheer cliffs looming opposite ancient camphor trees. You can drift on

1. Undulating mountains are all covered by emerald green bamboo groves. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. Ming-dynasty carvings on an ancient building (by Wu Dongshuang)
3. The Luya Gorge boasts jagged rocks, green coloured pools and dense forests. (by Wu Dongshuang)





bamboo rafts over rapids and shoals, and through calm pools in a stimulating, but very safe, adventure.

Next comes Longpan Lake, which is in fact a reservoir where water gathers deep in the mountains, forming a marvelous landscape of calm waters meandering through emerald green wooded mountains. At the end of the lake is a deep canyon called Luya with sheer cliffs and jagged rocks on either side. From the cliffs, you see a string of deep ponds lying at the canyon bottom reflecting dense woods in calm, greenish water. But at the canyon bottom, you find the blue sky is mirrored in the tranquil ponds, and the water appears blue.

In Luojiaping, the inner part of the Sanzhaolun Forest Park, the mountains are even taller and the forests denser. There are more streams and on the bigger ones rubber dinghies are prepared for the braver visitors.

In the valley log cabins and bamboo huts

are built for holidaymakers. Though rustic, they have all the necessary facilities. Restaurants serve delicacies and wild game from the mountains.

Unique Peaks and Waterfalls

Scattered in the Luojiaping area are

numerous unique scenic spots. The grand Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy) Rock is a huge rock towering into the sky. Waterfalls appear every 100 to 200 metres. Among them, the most interesting one is Xiannüyu (Shower-Taking Fairy), which is 30 metres high and three metres wide. Below it is a 1.7-metre-high



natural rock in the shape of a naked young woman. Water falls exactly on the rock.

Huxiao (Tiger-Roaring) Gorge is a quiet and twisting gorge full of fascinating scenes. Precipices and overhanging rocks loom on the sheer banks. In the middle section, a rock shaped like a monkey's face stimulates images of a monkey playing. In the lower section, the Hutou (Tiger Head) Rock resembles a fierce tiger with a wide-open mouth stretching towards the river.

Daotian (Sky-Dropping) Cliff, 50 metres high and 30 metres wide, stands in the middle of the gorge. It has a flat top over 10 metres long that offers a bird's-eye view of the undulating mountain ranges looming out to the horizon. Below the cliff is a mystical unfathomable gorge covered by primitive forests, that no one has ever reached.

Bamboo Groves and Parks

In Taipingzhou, bamboo plants, 15 centimetres in diameter and more than 20 metres high, grow everywhere. From the mountain top, you can see an endless sea of bamboo groves below you. Sanzhaolun also has an ancient temple — Baofeng Temple. Built in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the site is said to be where a Tang-dynasty monk of the Chan Sect died. Today the temple takes a new look after renovation.

Kuang Zhong Park, located on the mountain outside the east gate of the town, covers 53 hectares and is the first forest park established in Jiangxi. With green trees, towers and pavilions, the beautiful park is an ideal sightseeing spot. Kuang Zhong, a native of Jing'an, was a righteous official who cleared people of false charges.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

1. These primitive forests, free from human damage, retain their original charm. (by Wu Dongshuang)
2. The beautiful scenery on the lower reaches of the Dazi River (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. Felling trees is strictly forbidden now. A scene like this is long past. (by Shi Baoxiu)



Tips for the Traveller

Tours

The Jing'an County Forest Travel Bureau organises one-day and two-day tours to Sanzhaolun. One-day tour charges 98 yuan, including entry ticket, lunch, bamboo raft rental, motor ride, guide and insurance. Two-day tour charges 178 yuan to add two more meals, a breakfast and one night of accommodation.

Tel: (795) 465 1548 466 2979

Long-distance buses run from Nanchang Railway Station to Jing'an daily.

Minibuses are available from the county town to various scenic spots, and there are cars for hire. At the Forest Tower, a car may be rented for 180 yuan for one day and 320 yuan for two days. Tel: (795) 565 1548

Transport

There are regular flights and trains into Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi Province, from major cities in China.

Accommodation

There is the Jing'an Hotel in Jing'an, and the Nanling Holiday Village in Luojiaping. Both have rooms with a bathroom, starting from 80 yuan.



MACAO: BRILLIANT GIFTS, EVERLASTING MEMORY

Photos by Li Liang Article by Xiao Yu



One day during my Spring Festival vacation, I joined in a tour from Zhuhai to Macao. I had visited Macao many times, but I still felt excited this time because it was my first visit to this Mediterranean-style territory since the transfer of its government on December 20, 1999. After all, I was touring a neighbouring city of China, not a territory under an alien sovereignty.

Macao Revisited

While driving from the Border Gate through the city, I could see that Macao remained the same, so far as social life was concerned. The citizens of Macao were spending their lazy Sunday as usual. Many were having morning tea and dim sum at their neighbourhood restaurants. Some were setting tables outside their houses for playing mahjong games with relatives and friends, while others were returning home after an early market visit.

The towering Bank of China (Macao) Building, the imposing Hotel Lisboa and even the Gate of Understanding, one of the new landmarks the Portuguese had built as a memory of their over 400 years of government, were nothing new to me. But when our Macao World Travel Service shuttle bus approached the New Port area, my eyes brightened. With the construction of the Foreign Affairs Commissioner's Office and the Macao Cultural Centre, the whole area seemed to have put on a new look of modernity and prosperity.



Solemn Meeting Site

One new item added to the routine itineraries is a visit to the Cultural Centre and the neighbouring temporary conference site where the official ceremony of the transfer of the Macao government was held. The Cultural Centre is an eye-catching progressive structure, its flat, up-turned top imitating a full sail, symbolising Macao's voyage to a new era. At the entrance of the temporary conference site, we found, with surprised

pleasure, that the Exhibition of Gifts to Commemorate the Establishment of the Macao SAR had just opened.

The conference hall, though makeshift, appears magnificent, as it did on TV when the handover ceremony was held. The platform remains the same as it was at that historic moment, with the Chinese and Portuguese national flags hanging on either side of the wall. Above them, a large screen



was showing the scenes of the ceremony, the lowering and rising of the national flags, the presidents giving speeches, the playing of national anthems, the marching in and out of ceremonial guards.... Sitting on a chair in a front row, I felt as if time had turned back to December 20, 1999 and I were attending this epoch-making ceremony. I had tried to visit Macao and witness the handover with my own eyes, but my application was denied due to strict security control.

I was not the only sentimental one in the conference hall. Almost everyone had photos taken in front of the platform, with the national flags and emblems as the background. One family had even brought an infant of two or three months that might have been born on the day of the handover.

Characteristic Gifts

The back part of the conference hall had been turned into a showroom of the gifts presented to the Macao Special Administrative Region by the various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. When the Macao people were

indulging in the jubilation celebrating Macao's return to the motherland, people in other parts of China also shared their glory and pride. These gifts faithfully demonstrate the good will of the 1.2 billion Chinese.

Browsing through the 33 various gifts from all parts of China seems like visiting a national museum of handicrafts. There are stone sculptures, woodcarvings, embroideries, porcelain, carpets and many other forms of craft works. Each one of them is an exquisite handicraft piece. They not only best represent the characteristic art of the locality, but also showcase the unique environment or customs of the area.

As Vivid as Real

For the local people, these exhibits are also eye-openers through which they could learn about the motherland.

Sichuan is widely known as the home of the giant panda and the land where the picturesque Jiuzhaigou, a World Heritage site, is located. Putting this double prides together, the Sichuan Province presented the Macao SAR Government with a screen embroidered on both sides, entitled *Pandas in Jiuzhaigou*. In this realistic art piece the waters are so calm and the giant pandas so lively that visitors seem to have been placed into such a fairyland. No wonder panda lovers, children in particular, like to have their pictures taken in front of it.

Shanxi in North China is a land full of cultural relics, where over two-thirds of the national total of architectural structures built before the Liao and Jin dynasties (916-1234) are found. Its gift, a wood-carved model of Guanque Tower, one of the most famous extant ancient towers in China, displays the history of the province as one of the cradles of the Chinese culture. Made of walnut wood, the carving depicts the original tower on the bank of the Yellow River at Yongji, Shanxi, on a scale of 1:30. On its base are carved nine flying dragons and 99 lotus flowers, indicating the good wish for Macao's future.



The dragon is the cultural symbol of the Chinese nation. Whenever there is celebration, there is always the image of this auspicious creature. Based on the cultural tradition, Zhejiang Province in East China created a woven bamboo craft — *A Returned Pearl from the Sea* — which depicts two exquisitely made dragons dancing with a shining pearl, the symbol of Macao. Amazingly, the two dragons appear with smooth lines and the pearl above them seems to be suspended in the air.

Many gifts represent the treasures of the provinces. For example, Liaoning Province, the producer of famous Xiuyan jade, presented the *Harvest Moon with Nine Lions and Nine Lotus Flowers*, a huge jade carving. The *Nine Sheep and One Phoenix*, from Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, is carved out of the precious Helan stone found in the Helan Mountains in the region. Sometimes, the products do not appear "precious", but may inherently have more value. The two vases from Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province are unique. Their dark brown bodies show nothing special except the 24K gold rims at the bottom and the white lotus flowers decorating the top. Yet, after reading the introduction, every visitor views them more carefully and acclaims the thoughtful design and superior craftsmanship, for they are made of 20,000 walnut shells from the Greater and Lesser Hingan Mountains.

In front of the colourful tapestry from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, an old man was stepping back and forth, staring closely. It shows the beautiful scenery of Kanas Lake in northern Xinjiang — crystal-clear water showing reflections of the blue sky and white clouds, forests and snow-capped mountains. The picture looks so real and so expressive that it calls up the desire to visit this wonderland. When I offered to take his photo, he responded with a big smile.

Time flew. When the tour guide urged us to move on, I willingly decided to skip the rest of the itinerary and stay here longer to enjoy more of the exhibits.



1. National and regional flags are favourite souvenirs.
2. The temporary conference site and the Macao Cultural Centre are new places of interest for tourists.
3. The tapestry of Kanas Lake, a gift from Xinjiang
4. Children are fond of the lovely giant pandas.
5. It is hard to believe these dancing dragons — a gift from Zhejiang — are made of bamboo.

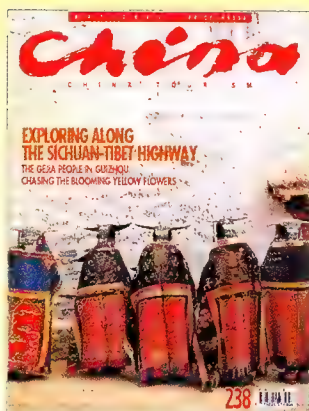


- We flag down a tricycle for our tour around **Kaifeng**, the ancient city in Henan Province, which was the capital of seven dynasties in Chinese history. Today, this old city continues to attract visitors with its fame of being a prosperous historical city and its well-protected

- On camels, we will go deep into the heart of the **Alxa Desert** that lies between Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and the western part of Inner Mongolia. Though not as well-known as the Taklimakan Desert in Xinjiang, this broad expanse of land endowed with attractive features such as oases, grasslands, mountains, rivers and lakes — not to mention its golden yellow rolling sand dunes — is turning into a fascinating travel destination. **Ningxia**, a region inhabited by a quarter of China's Hui people, has emerged as a popular choice of tourists due to its attractive landscapes and rich cultural legacy. At the foot of the scenic Helan Mountains, the mystical Western Xia Dynasty was founded.

architecture. Our 70-year-old tricycle driver not only serves as our guide but also discloses to us many anecdotes about Kaifeng which are not to be found in history books.

- For some tranquillity, come with us to **Tongli**, a Song-dynasty town built by the water near the Taihu Lake and the Grand Canal in Jiangsu Province. Here you can cross the over 40 old bridges spanning the rivers that divide this picturesque town into many islands. Or you can visit some of the grand Ming and Qing residences that were peaceful retreats for government officials and scholars. Tuisi Garden, the private garden of a dismissed official, is a particularly enchanting combination of water, pavilions, corridors and bridges.



Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from the readers. According to your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns to satisfy different demands. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
The Sichuan-Tibet Highway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gejia People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Southern Sichuan Bamboo Sea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening the Doors to the Underworld	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Yellow Flower Tour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traveller's Tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other opinions: _____					

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Are you happy with the factual contents of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

Hotels in Lhasa

Name	Star	Address	Postcode	Tel	Fax
Holiday Inn Lhasa	****	1 Minzu Rd.	850001	(891) 6332221	(891) 6335796
Tibet Hotel	***	221 Beijing Rd. W.	850001	(891) 6333677	(891) 6336787
Tibet Gold Grain Hotel	**	14 Yutuo Rd.	850000	(891) 6330357	(891) 6330367
Sunlight Hotel	**	27 Linju Rd.	850000	(891) 6322853	
Youdian Hotel	**	5 Lane 1, Lingkor Rd. E.	850000	(891) 6321445	
The Himalayas Hotel	*	6 Lingkor Rd. E.	850000	(891) 6322293	(891) 6332675
Gonggar Airport Hotel		Gonggar Airport		(891) 6337393	
Banak Shol Hotel		43 Beijing Rd. E.	850001	(891) 6323829	

Hotels in Chengdu

Name	Star	Address	Postcode	Tel	Fax
Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza	*****	31 Zongfu St.	610016	(28) 6786666	(28) 6786599
Jinjiang Hotel	*****	36 Section 2, Renmin Rd. S.	610012	(28) 5582222	(28) 5581849
Chengdu Hotel	****	East Section, Shudu Rd.	610066	(28) 4448888	(28) 4441603
Minshan Hotel	****	55 Section 2, Renmin Rd. S.	610021	(28) 5583333	(28) 5582154
Yinhe Dynasty Inter-Continental Hotel	****	99 Lower Xishuncheng St.	610016	(28) 6618888	(28) 6748837
Chengdu Grand Hotel	***	29 Block B, Renmin Rd. N.	610081	(28) 3333888	(28) 3336818
Pearl International Hotel	***	329 Section 2, Jiefang Rd.	610081	(28) 3358068	(28) 3320701
Tibet Hotel	***	10 Renmin Rd. N.	610081	(28) 3333988	(28) 3333526
Jinhe Grand Hotel	***	18 Jinhe St., West Section, Shudu Rd.	610031	(28) 6642888	(28) 6632037
Jinxin Hotel	***	18 Airport Rd.	610041	(28) 5189518	(28) 5189669
Jingchuan Hotel	***	144 West Section, Yihuan Rd.	610072	(28) 7784938	(28) 7747242
Garden Hotel	**	27 Dongfeng Rd.	610061	(28) 4445555	(28) 4444581
Imperial Hotel	**	Baishou St., 3rd West Section, Yihuan Rd.	610072	(28) 7762177	(28) 7777782
Tanghu Hotel	**	28 Xinan Lane, Dongsheng Town, Shuangliu	610200	(28) 5823088	(28) 5823666
Huadu Hotel	**	By the North Highway, Longquan	610100	(28) 4861616	(28) 4861657
Dianxin Hotel	**	3 Qinghe Rd.	610072	(28) 7783888	(28) 7760133
Shuhan Hotel	**	258 Wuhou St.	610041	(28) 5556988	(28) 5587977
Wanguan Hotel	**	Shuangliu Airport		(28) 5581466	

Flights to and from **Chengdu**

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Fuzhou — Chengdu	1 3 6	0855	1215	IV8417
	1	1150	1500	3U 536
	4	1205	1520	3U 712
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1750	2125	SZ4508
Chengdu — Fuzhou	1	0750	1110	3U 535
	4	0820	1120	3U 711
	1 3 6	1255	1610	IV8418
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1345	1710	SZ4507
Guangzhou — Chengdu	1 3 4 6	0755	1000	H4 255
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0820	1010	CZ3403
	1 2 3 4 5 6	0945	1155	SZ4308
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1005	1200	3U 332
	2 6	1210	1520	3U 338
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1245	1445	SZ4306
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1350	1540	CZ3413
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1500	1705	SZ4302
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1540	1745	3U 336
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1845	2035	SZ4304
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2010	2210	SZ4382
Chengdu — Guangzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6	0715	0850	SZ4307
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0730	0925	3U 331
	2 6	0750	1120	3U 337
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1000	1155	SZ4305
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1110	1305	CZ3404
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1225	1420	SZ4301
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1300	1455	3U 335
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1600	1755	SZ4303
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1640	1830	CZ3414
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1700	1850	SZ4381
	1 3 4 6	2010	2210	H4 256
Guilin — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 7	1915	2040	SZ4324
	6	1945	2110	SZ4324
	3 5 7	2020	2140	3U 362
Chengdu — Guilin	1 2 3 4 5 7	1715	1835	SZ4323
	6	1745	1905	SZ4323
	3 5 7	1825	1940	3U 361
Hong Kong — Chengdu	2 3 6	1125	1350	SZ 412
	1 4 5 7	1810	2035	SZ 412
Chengdu — Hong Kong	2 3 6	0815	1025	SZ 411
	1 4 5 7	1500	1710	SZ 411
Lanzhou — Chengdu	2 6	1425	1545	WH2415
	1 4	1435	1545	WH2415
	3 5 7	1615	1735	WH2431
Chengdu — Lanzhou	3 5 7	1815	1945	WH2432
	1 4	2015	2130	WH2416
	2 6	2015	2140	WH2416
Shanghai — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0840	1120	FM 541
	1 2 4 5	1045	1320	SZ4540
	7	1100	1320	SZ4540
	3 6	1310	1700	SZ4530
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1610	1840	SZ4516
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1650	1910	3U 562

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Shanghai — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1705	1945	MU5403
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1800	2030	SZ4502
Chengdu — Shanghai	1 2 4 5	0750	1000	SZ4539
	7	0750	1015	SZ4539
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0800	1000	3U 561
	3 6	0850	1220	SZ4529
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1145	1355	SZ4515
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1210	1420	FM 542
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1500	1710	SZ4501
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2025	2230	MU5404
Shenyang — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0940	1420	CJ6401
Chengdu — Shenyang	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1520	1930	CJ6402
Tianjin — Chengdu	1 4 6	0715	1105	CA1421
	2 5	0855	1215	X2 237
Chengdu — Tianjin	1 4 6	1150	1545	CA1422
	2 5	1300	1630	X2 238
Zhengzhou — Chengdu	2 7	0950	1120	SZ4710
	4 7	1005	1620	3U 755/6
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1245	1420	CZ3471
	4 7	1515	1620	3U 755/6
	2 4 6	1550	1730	Z2 375
	4	1900	2035	SZ4710
Chengdu — Zhengzhou	2 7	0745	0910	SZ4709
	4 7	0750	0910	3U 755/6
	4 7	0750	1425	3U 755/6
	4	1640	1820	SZ4709
	2 4 6	1800	1930	Z2 376
	1 2 3 4 5 6	1820	1950	CZ3472

Flights to and from **Lhasa**

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Lhasa	1 4	0745	1310	SZ4112
Lhasa — Beijing	4	1015	1510	SZ4111
Chengdu — Lhasa	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0630	0825	SZ4401
	2 6 7	0710	0910	SZ4405
	4	0710	0940	SZ4409
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0720	0920	SZ4403
	1 4	1120	1310	SZ4112
Lhasa — Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0925	1110	SZ4402
	7	0935	1205	SZ4410
	4	1015	1205	SZ4111
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1030	1215	SZ4404
	1 3 4 7	1345	1530	SZ4406
Chongqing — Lhasa	2 6	1035	1250	SZ4312
Lhasa — Chongqing	6	1325	1530	SZ4311
Xi'an — Lhasa	1 5	0915	1245	SZ4217
	3 7	1100	1310	SZ4812
Lhasa — Xi'an	1 5	1330	1715	SZ4218
	2 6	1350	1615	SZ4811

* For reference only.

Airline codes:

CA = Air China

IV = Fujian Airlines

X2 = China Xinhua Airlines

CJ = China Northern Airlines

MU = China Eastern Airlines

Z2 = Zhongyuan Airlines

CZ = China Southern Airlines

SZ = China Southwest Airlines

3U = Sichuan Airlines

FM = Shanghai Airlines

WH = China Northwest Airlines

H4 = Hainan Airlines



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北京燕莎友谊商城有限公司

Beijing YouYi Shopping City Co. Ltd.
Beijing Lufthansa Center

Add: 52 Liangmaqiao Road, Beijing, China 100016
Tel: 010-64651851 Fax: 010-64651851
E-mail: yansha@public.fhnet.cn.net

